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IN DARKEST
CHRISTENDOM



IN DARKEST CHRISTENDOM AND A WAY OUT OF THE DARKNESS

BY

ARTHUR BERTRAM

I applied mine heart to know, and to
search, and to seek out wisdom, AND
THE REASON OF THINGS.

Ecclesiastes vii. 25

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PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION

THESE pages have been carefully re-perused with a view to revision, but except for the re-casting of one short paragraph, which was perhaps obscure, the text has been left unaltered.

The development of recent events confirms only too surely some of the worst apprehensions expressed herein at the time when we had but recently emerged from the war. A moral insanity afflicts the counsels of the nation, precluding, so long as it persists, all hope of escape from the increasing chaos. The League of Nations has met, "reconstruction" propaganda has been proceeding apace, the Lambeth Report and Encyclical have been issued—and every evil increases.

It is not for lack of would-be instructors; but, among the voices which succeed in catching the popular ear, there appears to be hardly one which offers us real wisdom and guidance. Many of the most vociferous of our mentors are but blindly urging us on to the pit. On most of the great questions of righteousness, which constitute our real problems, organized and official religion is dumb—or worse; the Press, now become almost entirely reactionary, is feverishly pursuing its own ends,

while the men we returned to Parliament in that insensate election in 1918 are doing what men so elected might be expected to do. We have hardly one real prophet, who can make his voice heard, in Pulpit, Press or Parliament, most of those who adopt that rôle being apparently as unwilling to face the real issues as the people themselves.

Meanwhile, the night approaches, blacker and more lowering. The signs contemplated in Chapter VI have developed with alarming rapidity. The mad greed of the commercial classes finds itself face to face with the violent resentment of the workers. Murder and arson in Ireland are met by murder and arson masquerading as government. The nations of the world sit apart, greedy, suspicious and hostile; and security is sought in beggaring ourselves, while our people go unhoused, to provide £9,000,000 battleships and more devilish submarines, all to smash each other to pieces more rapidly than we were already performing that office for ourselves. The one time Allies are inventing long-range guns which will enable British and French to sit down in their own countries and hurl high explosives into each other's capitals; while nice respectable gentlemen are preparing ever more deadly poison gases to asphyxiate us by whole communities—and we let them do it!

There is one only way of escape from the hell that most surely threatens us, and that is to *repent*; by which we do not mean to make our peace with the Church, or to grovel at a penitent form in a revival meeting. We mean the real thing that Christ literally said when

He used the word so translated, viz. to *change our minds*. It may seem a hopeless task to preach this message to a people bent on self-destruction, but for the third time the writer ventures to send forth his message, with the humble hope and prayer that the alarm may be taken up, and the tocsin resounded till the countryside is awake to the danger, and aroused to repel it.

ARTHUR BERTRAM.

January, 1921.

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IN DARKEST CHRISTENDOM

I

THE DARKNESS

1. QUO VADIS ?

FOR many years it was an article of faith among our leaders of thought that Christendom, on the whole, was treading the path of progress. The darkness, they believed, was passing at last, and in modern theories and programmes for the betterment of mankind they hailed the first faint glimmer of the coming day. During the years of war, however, many of these fond dreamers must have rubbed their eyes. The vision of the reign of brotherhood has failed to materialize as by all their theories it should have done. We have witnessed instead the emergence of violence and fraud as dominating forces in the affairs of men. Honour, justice and pity have been sacrificed to the lust for dominion; greed and cruelty have overflowed all bounds, and the face of the earth is covered with a pall of grief and horror. This melancholy sequel to such widely cherished hopes may well raise a question in our minds as to whether our faces ever were truly set towards the dawn. May it not rather be that, when we thought we were "making progress," we were really all the while hasting along a road that was inevitably bound to lead to the present darkness?

To this some may object that a distinction should be made—that the same judgment must not be applied to all the various nations of Christendom. They were not

all travelling in the same direction, it may be urged, and the division of the nations into two hostile camps may be pointed to as a proof of this. The great world-struggle has been regarded as a "spiritual conflict," a death-grapple between the forces of light and of darkness, with Britain and her Allies "on the side of the angels," so that the triumph of their arms should mean the victory of the angels, and the ushering in of the dawn of a stable peace, and of the reign of right over brute force.

As regards the spiritual conflict, there can be no doubt that such a conflict is actually being waged, and waged lately on a scale of unexampled magnitude. This spiritual conflict, indeed, is the great reality, of which the physical struggle is but the visible outcome and manifestation. But is it safe to assume so complacently that the issue between the nations is clear-cut and defined, that the opposing camps have exactly represented the opposing principles, and that the victory of the Allies involves any great set-back for the forces of evil that plague and torture humanity, or the securing of peace on earth in any sense worthy of the word?

A glance backward at the general trend of Christendom before the war, and at the stages which the various nations had reached, brings a disquieting reflection. Little was seen in those days to justify the assumption that the peoples of the Allied nations were pursuing essentially different moral ideals from those followed by the enemy nations. If, in this "spiritual conflict," the forces of good and of evil have been represented by the Allies on the one hand and by the Central Powers on the other, some startling difference of aim and of outlook should surely have manifested itself before the war, increasing in intensity year by year until it reached its climax in the outbreak of hostilities. Apart from the fact, however, that Germany's vices led her in the direction of militarism and plunder, it is difficult to discern many such differences in *essentials*, however great may have been the difference in *degree*, and in the lengths to which each nation was prepared to go in the pursuit of its aims.

Germany's valuation of essentials was practically ours ; the things she believed to be desirable we also thought desirable ; in the main, what her people strove after we strove after. In the things, in fact, that were most typical of the age, and on which the age chiefly prided itself, Germany even led the way ; and she is still frequently flattered by prominent but foolish statesmen and publicists among the Allies on her " contribution to modern thought." Our sons were sent to her colleges, and it was a proud boast when a young man could say he had " been to school in Germany." Our writers were fond of showing that they had a smattering of German " thought " ; our preachers dragged diffidently behind them in their theology ; and the fury of our Anti-German leagues under their various names and guises, and of the Anti-German press, showed little trace of reprobation of German ideals. More often it was merely a compound of emulation, fear and jealousy.

The spirit of Germanism was making gigantic strides in the Entente countries before the war. The war, for Germany, was really unnecessary. It was the biggest mistake of all the mistakes that foolish nation has made, but it was merely the common mistake of attempting to pluck fruit before it is ripe. Germany was probably quite sincere in saying that one of her chief aims was to spread the ideal of her " kultur." But to start a war was the very worst way to go about this. She needed only to have continued as she was going on, and she would soon have been the moral and spiritual mistress of the world, and the material gain that she lusted after would have accrued to her as a result of the moral and intellectual subjugation of the nations. The war has, perhaps, awakened us to our danger in time. With all its horror, it may yet save us from a worse fate. It committed us to the venture of our all on the side of right and decency, as it committed Germany to the staking of everything on the side of evil. In taking up the gage thrown down by Germany, Britain took up a task which may yet lead to the saving of her soul. For the war should make,

clear, to all whose eyes are not blinded, the nature of the spirit that has increasingly animated Germany of recent years; and it may lead us, if we are wise, to purge ourselves of that spirit in so far as it had obtained a lodgment among us. Had God intended to give the nations one last chance of seeing whither they were tending, and of retracing their steps, He could hardly have done other than He has done in allowing Germany to exhibit herself to the nations as an object lesson. He has been holding her up to the nations in all her nakedness and lewdness, to show in her the full-blown fruit of a swinish materialism, of godless cleverness, conceit and self-sufficiency. And, as we have gazed on the picture, we have seen her boasted philosophy issue in filthiness and ferocity, and her "kultur" in naked bestiality.

To be horrified at results without enquiring into causes is hardly the way of wisdom. To stand aghast when we see the fruits without searching deeply for the roots will not prevent those roots from again bearing the same, or an even more poisonous crop. Militarism is the branch on which the bitter fruit has grown, but we have to seek the root. And that is deeper down, and has struck its tendrils into other than German soil. The terrible events we have witnessed are symptoms of a common malady, a malady that has doubtless pursued its ravages further in Germany than elsewhere, but one which, if unchecked, will in due course manifest itself in equally terrible symptoms the world over. The emergence of the traits we have seen in Germany may well arouse in us a profound disquiet concerning ourselves, for reflection and enquiry may convince us that we were travelling in the same direction, though Germany was possibly fifty years further along the road to hell than we were.

2. A NEW ENQUIRY.

We frequently hear it suggested that the war has thrown back civilization a couple of centuries, or that Germany under militarism, or Russia under Czarism,

belonged to the Middle Ages. The remark was made in a London evening paper, on the eve of the unrestricted submarine campaign, that if Germany could establish its right to such a use of that weapon, civilization "would be thrown back a hundred years." On another page of the same issue the journal quoted a treaty concluded between Prussia and the United States in 1799, which provided that, in the event of war arising between those two countries, the merchants of either country then residing in the other should be allowed to remain nine months to settle their affairs, and to depart freely, carrying off all their effects without molestation, and that all women and children, scholars, cultivators of the earth, artisans, manufacturers and fishermen, unarmed and inhabiting unfortified places, and in general all whose occupations are for the common subsistence and benefit of mankind, should be allowed to continue their respective employments; that neither they nor their goods, lands or houses should be molested by the armed forces of the enemy, but that if it should be necessary to take anything from them for the use of an armed force the same should be paid for at a reasonable price.

If this treaty is in any measure indicative of the attitude of the nations one toward another a hundred years ago, does it not appear that it would be an unspeakable blessing if civilization *could* be thrown back a hundred years? To put the question more practically, would it not be an immense gain if we would give up once and for all the pretence that modern civilization has effected any moral improvement whatever? This is not an academic question, but a practical one; for if the belief that civilization has made mankind better than its fathers is a delusion, it will pay us to abandon the delusion, and face the facts, and so place ourselves in a better position for dealing with the innumerable horrors both of peace and of war.

The popular opinion takes the essential moral progress of mankind for granted. It assumes that the world under modern civilization before the war was morally in advance of preceding ages. It may perhaps be difficult to prove

the erroneousness of this assumption, for each age has its own peculiar tendencies, which renders difficult a comparison of one age with another. But in view of what we have seen in our own day, it is time an enquiry was made into the moral condition of *our own age*—a task which ought to have been taken up long ere this by far abler hands than the present writer's. So far as our observation goes, this has never been done, or at least not in any work which has secured general attention. Attacks on specific evils have of course been made in plenty, and proposals for specific remedies are equally common, but we have never come across an enquiry into our *essential* moral condition. Yet, unless we get right on this point, it is impossible even to begin to apply a remedy; all schemes for amelioration must be foredoomed to failure. Previous enquiries have dealt with various symptoms which are the *outcome* of our moral condition; the number of crimes which come into the courts is known, as is also the number of people who are compelled to seek the cold charity of our asylums of refuge for the destitute. Approximations have been attempted of the numbers of women living on the streets, and of other unsavoury features of our modern civilization. But such researches are very much like counting the pock marks on a patient instead of investigating the cause of the malady. Even when they profess to include enquiries into causes, it is only secondary causes that are enquired into. Researches into the origin of small-pox have established the fact that the root cause is dirt; and some analogous cause might be found if an examination were made, not of the various rashes which appear on the skin of society, but of the essential condition of the body social, and the source of its diseases.

Such an examination will be found to give little ground for complacency. It will lead rather to the conclusion that the war, and the even more terrible events which may well be looming in the near future, are but the ulcers on the body which betray the unhealthy state of the blood within. For such an enquiry it is necessary that

the investigator should be really in earnest, and prepared to abandon all predilections on setting out to make the investigation. This is the practical difficulty. Nothing arouses such contemptuous opposition as the suggestion that there is anything radically wrong with mankind itself, as apart from its institutions. Many a prophet and reformer whose shrine we now decorate was stoned for making such a suggestion to his own generation. The belief in the general upward trend of man is an article of faith more strenuously held than any article of religion, for its devotees feel they have an acute personal interest in the question, which so few really feel with regard to their religion. Yet to cling obstinately to this idea, and to persist in turning away from a real examination into the nature of a malady which has slain our young manhood by millions, is to shut ourselves out from all hope of a remedy, and to condemn ourselves and our children to perish from its ravages.

The enquiry is difficult; for what is necessary is that man should put himself in the dock, and that he should at the same time be witness, jury and judge. Let it be remembered, however, that the dock is not necessarily a place for guilty people, but only for people whose conduct is called in question, and that in the absence of conclusive evidence the accused must be discharged without a stain on his character. In accordance with our good old English custom, we must assume that man is innocent till proved guilty.

Here the objection may be raised, "What is the good of such an enquiry? We know there is a great deal that is wrong, but your enquiry leads nowhere. What we need now are practical suggestions for improving matters."

But, in social troubles, as in physical, the diagnosis is everything. Imagine a patient arguing with his physician, and refusing to submit himself to examination—refusing to let him probe into the condition of heart, blood and brain. Imagine him exclaiming, "Never mind the examination! Get on with the remedy! Fetch out your

medicine!" No man would be such a fool. And such folly, though it is almost universal in moral and social matters, is utterly opposed to the scientific spirit of the age in every other department of life. The physician must lay bare every secret thing. Matters never talked about in polite society must be known by him. Under the inviolable seal of professional secrecy, everything must be confessed, every secret habit, every event in the patient's history. And if there is to be any hope of recovery, the patient, especially if the fault is his own, must be told just what is wrong. Just the things he thought did not matter—just those things which he imagined had nothing to do with the case—these are precisely the things on which the medical man lays his finger. How much more tragic even than the secrets of the lawyer's office may be the secrets of the consulting-room of the physician!

Yet, after all, the patient does not visit his medical man merely to hear how bad he is, but to learn how he may get better; and often enough the physician's advice is a message, not only of warning, but of hope. But the prescription is often vastly different from what the patient anticipated. He had expected the doctor to give him "a bottle of something" to put him right, and say no more about it. But it is well known that the doctor's shelves contain few specific remedies for disease, and that the cure is often largely in the patient's hands if he will only follow the directions indicated by the diagnosis. The doctor may indeed give him medicine, but the man himself is the thing, and his manner of life. "Come," says the physician, "there is no reason why you should not get well. We'll soon have you all right. But *you must do this*, and *you must give up that*." Of course the patient usually promises, but, should he prove recalcitrant, then he is plainly warned that that way lies insanity, paralysis or death.

And the scientific spirit of our day, in natural things, encourages the conscientious and unprejudiced search after truth for its own sake; it is amazing that no such

enquiry is made into the greatest of all questions—the question that lies at the root of our welfare. In the purely material realm, so long as the investigator keeps his discoveries separate from his theories, there are few things more admirable than the love of truth shown by the real scientific spirit. The “practical” man (most impractical of beings) will often ask, “What is the good of it?” If the investigation is not directed immediately to the saving of money or labour, or the increase of production, he has no patience with it. But the scientist will show him that discoveries made purely in the pursuit of truth for its own sake, from Newton’s discovery of the law of gravitation to Mendeleeff’s discovery of the periodicity of the elements, have borne prolific fruit in art and industry, and in ministering to the needs and amenities of life. It has been pointed out, for instance, that the pre-eminence of the Germans in the coal tar industry (though we had the raw material) was due to their having studied the benzene molecule, while English manufacturers were content to study the benzene market. And even if there still remain some few discoveries which so far have yielded no “practical” result, “why then,” says the scientist, “we value them because we value the truth for its own sake.”

And he is right. And we should be wise to study in the same spirit the truths which underlie the life of society, and which are the real cause of the visible phenomena of that life. If a machine or an engineering work is built, into the construction of which an error of principle or of calculation has entered, the result is a failure—sometimes a disaster. The laws of mechanics do not alter to accommodate the faulty design, but the truth works itself out with relentless precision. All things work out according to the truth concerning those things, *whether that truth is known and admitted or not*. A man may think he has sown wheat, but his thought will not prevent barley springing up, if that is what really lies germinating in the ground. We may think we are drinking pure water, but if it contain the typhoid germ the

disease will follow, spite of our thought. So the new world we are looking forward to will be a world which is the outcome of our *true* moral condition to-day—of what we are—and not a world corresponding to any delusions we may have about the matter. How much wiser, then, to seek out and know the truth—to be reconciled with it—to put ourselves in line with it, and act in accordance with it, that so the truth may be our friend, and not our enemy—our life, and not our death.

3. A PRIMA FACIE CASE.

But is there, it may be asked, a *prima facie* case against man, that we should put him in the dock at all?

It would seem there is. Without entering at this stage into details, the present state of Christendom ought to lead every honest person to admit that man *appears*, at any rate, to be a failure. Yet all do not admit this, and even in the midst of the present welter of horror and misery, we still find many ready to sing his praises.

How wonderful is man! (says man), How godlike! How sublime in his thoughts and aspirations! How mighty in his achievements! He has sought out and laid bare the secrets of Nature, and harnessed her forces to his chariots. The mighty influence of electricity waits to do his bidding, and carries his messages around the globe. The obedient atoms move at his command, and rush together to form the molecules of the thing that he desires to minister to his pleasure or profit, or to destroy his enemies. The powers of combustion are imprisoned at his will, and find their vent only in moving the engine that shall bear him aloft beyond the clouds. His eye pierces the silent spaces of the starry orbs, and he tells their comings and their goings. His mind penetrates the universe beyond, and soars into the realm of the eternal mysteries, of which he will one day be the master.

Ay, but look again. Turn from the picture of an inflamed imagination, and look at the true picture—

man as he *is*—as the angels look down from heaven and see him ; and behold how wonderful truly is man.

In the first place, as to what man *is*, in himself. He has been endowed with a body which proclaims the miracle of his Maker's wisdom. It is strange how few people ever give a thought to this marvellous structure which they bear about with them. Sometimes, when the writer is on his knees thanking God for the mercies of the day, the thought of all that body and brain have been able to bear during the hours of activity, continued for thousands of days on end, almost overwhelms him, and he cries out of his very heart, "I will praise Thee, O God, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made !" How marvellous are the processes of nature within us ! Probably most men past middle age, looking back on their lives, can see many ways in which they have sinned, perhaps unwittingly, or by force of circumstances, against their bodies. They have been largely deprived of the pure air that was created for them to breathe, and compelled to inhale the sad mixture of smoke, powdered refuse, exhaust gases and human effluvia which is the product of our modern civilization. Or they have been diverted from the kinds of work which their bodies were primarily framed to perform, and forced to spend their days in unnatural and unhealthy occupations. Quite apart from any guilty aberrations, they have put a strain on this wonderful mechanism such as would have cracked up any machine made by human hands in a few months. And even when the body is given a fair chance, by the leading of a more natural life, how manifold and marvellous are the operations which go on from moment to moment, for sixty—eighty—ninety years, day and night. The mind reels even to think of them ; the functions of oxidation, nutrition, purification, the marvel of metabolism, the operations of chemistry and mechanics ; and that elusive but potent *something*, found nowhere but in organic beings, which has been called "vital force," which co-ordinates everything else, and maintains the equilibrium without which the body in a few hours would

turn to carrion. The writer has always been most impressed by that function, or combination of functions, which constitutes what may be called "repairs and renewals." Most people are out of bed for sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, and activities of the most varied description are being engaged in for the best part of that time, all involving expenditure of tissue and nerve force. Yet, during the first half of the years of life, the body normally rises each morning, on the average, stronger than on the previous day, while, with those leading wholesome lives, vigour is maintained for very many years after that period, and the power of the brain, *if used*, actually increases right up to the end of the allotted span. Every doctor now knows that the body is its own healer in disease, and even in surgical cases. Such drugs as are of real value are usually administered, not to effect a specific cure, but to reinforce some threatened organ or function while the body fights out its own battle. If the enlightened medical man could have his way, he would mostly prescribe for his patients, not medicine, but change of air, change of food, change of habit; work for the idle, rest for the weary, and fresh air for all. For he knows that the body, within itself, is furnished with the most marvellous equipment for the maintenance of health, and even for its restoration in all ordinary contingencies.

The abode of man is as wonderful as his body. Whether this earth be really the centre of the universe, as a recent scientist has maintained, seems doubtful, but it is impossible to imagine a sphere more marvellously adapted for man's habitation. There does not seem to be a movement or operation in the whole universe, so far as it affects this earth, that man could dispense with. A slight difference in the dispositions or movements of the heavenly bodies would make it impossible for man, as we know him, to exist. The minutest disturbance to the equilibrium of nature on the earth's surface would make his life a misery to him. Nature is replete with provision for his sustenance and enjoyment. Although

we ransack the earth, and tear the stored treasure from its bowels, with such mad and reasonless avidity ; although even in peace time we waste, and worse than waste, three parts of the fruits of the earth and of labour with shameless profligacy ; yet we still have enough and to spare, though monopolized too often by the few. The cant expression which was so popular among a certain type of economist a century ago, " the niggardliness of nature," is one of the foulest of many foul libels on the Creator ; for what we do is to monopolize and waste His gifts, and then abuse the Giver.

The beauty of earth is so varied, so inspiring, so overwhelming, that the contemplation of it is almost more than the sensitive soul can bear. The heart cries out, " Lord, stay Thy hand, it is enough." Air and sunshine, and the gentle rain ; the nectar of the breath of dawn, and the calm, still peace of evening. Mountain and valley and moorland, seascape and landscape and flowers. The sun rising in his strength in his chariot of fire, flooding the whole earth with his glory, or departing through his western gateway of pearl and gold, leaving the world to the solemn hush of night, the silence of the voices of the stars.

In the midst of all this glory and beauty stands the fool—man. Gifted, indeed, with a mind capable of appreciating and enjoying this profuse display, dowered with powers of intellect which appear to know no limit, and which should render him capable of attaining all, and more than all, that has ever entered his wildest dreams ; yet lacking one thing—wisdom. Perishing for lack of wisdom !

For how has man profited by the lavish gifts and opportunities which have been placed in his hands ? What has this wonderful being done with the talents committed to him ?

He appears to have been actuated throughout by a fixed belief in the unkindness of his Creator. From this delusion has arisen a great part of " man's inhumanity to his brother man." Nature, wedded to labour, can be

relied on to provide in plenty for all his needs, whether of sustenance or wholesome enjoyment; there is no excuse for each to fight and struggle for his share, or to cast evil eyes on his brother. Yet, in his blind folly, instead of enjoying God's good gifts, and letting his brother enjoy them, he rushes upon them, and uses up the greater part of them in fighting his neighbour. The whole "economic question" is of man's own creation; it is as if a litter of pigs, after fighting and pushing to get into the trough, scattering and wasting its contents instead of enjoying them, were then to sit round and solemnly discuss the "economic situation." A reasonable race would have so ordered its affairs that each member should contribute his quota of service to the community, by hand, or brain, or voice or pen, and each naturally receive out of the work done by all for all whatever might be necessary for his maintenance and enjoyment, and for his equipment for further achievement. Having arranged these secondary matters, man would not have needed to think much more about them, but would have been free to turn his thoughts to *life*—not food and raiment, much less "riches," but *life*—to study what it is, what is its meaning, and how it is to be lived so as to fulfil the purpose of his being.

But—no. The ideal of mutual service has been the last thing to inform and inspire man in the ordering of his affairs. The only organization of society that exists in these matters is not far removed from organized anarchy. Even our justest laws are only framed to secure a free field to each to struggle against his fellows, and to protect the successful in the "enjoyment" of the fruits of their success. What sort of happy family would that be where the contents of the larder, and the products of the kitchen, were thrown open to competition, and the authority of the head of family was only exercised to secure to the strongest or most cunning the larger portion which they had been able to snatch? Had our affairs been ordered with a view to the general welfare and happiness, as is done in a household, the economic expenditure of

society in labour, wealth, brain, nerve and tissue would have been directly and wholly—instead of merely incidentally and partially, as at present—devoted to the production of such things as the community might need, or reasonably desire—food and clothing, homes, art, teachers—whatever the community might deem desirable for its life and progress. At present the greater part of human energy is wasted, in peace time, in warring against each other.

It is usually assumed that the labours of “the workers,” at least, are devoted to production; they do at least turn out something. But the product of their labours is largely degraded to the same unholy end. The toil of the coal or iron miner, of the half-naked worker in the foundry, the engineer, mechanic or builder; the man on the footplate and the man in the stokehole, the printer and the postman, is largely devoted, not to ministering to the real requirements of their fellow-men, but to providing munitions for the warring members of society. And this, too, in a war for which there is not the slightest necessity.

Life is looked upon as a battle. And so perhaps it should be, but not a battle between man and his fellow. A house divided against itself cannot stand, yet society is organized on the principle of each member's hand being against his fellows, with occasional sectional combinations where mutual interest may suggest that course. This is not merely an intellectual mistake—a faulty social economy—it is a result of our egoistic instincts, it is the *sin* of the human race. We would suggest to those good people who hold so correctly the doctrine that man is sinful, that they should look *here* for the working of this principle. We would suggest to those who talk with bated breath of “the world,” as of a very evil place, that “the world” is not merely a place where people drink, swear, play cards, stay away from chapel on Sundays, and do other things of which you disapprove; it is a system in which they do things of which you approve, and in which you take part, but which are more flagrant

infractions of the law of love than many of the things at which you are horrified. Would it not be reasonable to expect, if the doctrine of the depravity of man is true, that this will be seen in the world's *institutions*, and not merely in those departures from its institutions which you call sin—not merely, for instance, in those infractions of the system which we call theft, but in the system itself?

Like all sins, the system is foolishness too, for it brings little happiness to the “successful,” while it inflicts untold misery on the victims. Yet it is to be feared that an enormous number of people would not have the system done away with if they could. If you could give the comfortable classes an absolute assurance that by changing our methods we could provide for all, that we could relieve the struggling millions of want, and the fear of want that oppresses them like a nightmare; that we could save a hundred thousand children a year from an untimely grave, and a million from growing up into stunted and imperfect human beings, we fear the majority of them *would not have it*. Long and anxious observation, and reflection on the state of mind exhibited by the remarks of those with whom he has conversed, have convinced the writer that those classes *want* poverty to exist; they will even insist upon it. Man delights to dominate over his fellow-man, and demands that there shall always be a class beneath him. In order to justify the existing injustice, with all its cruelty, they will even declare that Christ said, “The poor ye shall always have with you,” which He did not say; but He said some other things as to our responsibility towards our brother which ought to give us serious concern if we set sufficient store by His words to quote—or misquote—them.

Let not the reader harden himself against these remarks because he “does not believe in socialism.” The writer is not a socialist, and is not going to preach socialism, or any other “ism”—unless it be altruism. Enquiring into facts, however, is no more socialism than it is somnambulism. The few words we have to say on the way

man has dealt with the material things of life are imposed on us by the fact that this constitutes one item of evidence for the enquiry into our moral condition.

A very moderate percentage of our normal expenditure of activity, rightly directed, would supply the wants and amenities of life, and abolish poverty and improper conditions of existence. But, the object of each one's activities being to gain for *himself*, it is impossible that such activities should be rightly directed. Commerce and industry as at present organized are not merely competitive, they are *war*. It is not competition in the sense of emulation as to who shall do the best work, and accomplish most for the general welfare; this would be Christian competition—provoking to love and to good works—it is a constant struggle of each to capture the prizes for himself at the expense of others. The greater part of the products of the labour of hand and brain goes to feed this engine of ceaseless warfare. A fraction alone is devoted to supplying the community, and that with articles made, and services rendered, with a view to the profit of the supplier, and not to the benefit of the user. And our education is largely and increasingly directed, not, as we fondly say, to turning out useful citizens, but to equipping and training the people to rush into the everlasting struggle.

Hundreds of millions are spent annually in advertisement, each advertiser trumpeting the manifest falsehood that his goods are the best; and hundreds of millions more are spent in kindred services, all directed, not to serving each other, but to defeating the efforts of competitors, and capturing positions of advantage for ourselves, and the man who is most skilled at this game is considered the best "business man." We could fill our volume with illustrations in proof of our case, but the reader should think it out for himself. It should not take him long to arrive at the conclusion that if we conducted war as we conduct our social affairs the Germans would have been in London by 1915. And he will soon begin to marvel that, under such a system, the countless

millions of the populace are fed and provided for at all. The explanation of the fact that they *are* mostly provided for—after a style—lies of course in the fact that the produce of nature and of labour is so generous that we can afford to play the fool with the greater part of it. It may eventually turn out, however, that the drain of the war will have exhausted our margin, and we shall follow this course in future at our peril.

We have no objection to socialism, if it can be shown that that will save us, but socialism alone offers no indication that men will turn to serving others instead of themselves. What remedy, then, *do* we propose? it may be asked. But it is worse than useless to put forward a proposal till we are agreed on the facts, and on the true bearing of those facts. When once people's minds are informed by a right understanding of the true state of affairs, and inspired by a sincere desire to remedy that state, it will be *an easy task* for the brains now engaged in commercialism so to adjust the distribution of the overwhelming produce of the earth and of labour as to satisfy the needs of all. Our object for the moment is merely to get the *facts* recognized—to assist the reader in the examination that we have proposed into the moral condition of mankind. Can man be proud of his performance? In a world where he is surrounded by such glorious profusion of gifts for heart and mind and body, would an intelligent people, actuated by reasonably decent instincts, have produced such a condition of society? Is it not in fact a disgrace to man that his chief preoccupation should still be material things at all—of which there is enough and to spare—and that poverty, that awful social crime, should still exist, with all its fruits of squalor and misery, disease, madness and death?

Think of the sin we have committed against our fellows in all this. Think of the slain and wounded and broken in *this* battle. Look at the slums and dens where myriads of our brethren and sisters, made in the likeness of God, struggle through their stifled and fevered lives, surrounded within a few miles by the millions of God's

fair acres, and the ocean of His life-giving air and sunshine, but which their fellow-men's greed forbids them to see and breathe. Watch them at their labours, often, as we have seen, as useless in the true sense of the word as they are hopeless and joyless in the doing. Mark the stench of the drink shop, that "people's palace"¹—push through the children at the door, and behold the people at their pleasures. See their masters, the possessors, owning the earth, but incapable of enjoying it. Watch the fevered eagerness with which they compete, even in wartime, for the material things with which they are already surfeited to repletion. Mark the unholy scramble for the higher places, and for the "honours" which are no honour. Listen to the cry of the children, born for the most part with bodies, and embryo minds, capable of wonderful development—so forgiving is Nature, and so mighty in her renewing energy—but condemned by sin and selfishness to waste away into their squalid graves, or to grow up, oftentimes, into a curse to themselves and a reproach to humanity. Enter into earth's prison-houses, her asylums and infirmaries, where one-fourth of the nation die, and while men boast of these products of their civilization, ask why they are needed, and how they are filled. Follow the products of our husbandry and industry through all their processes; see the golden grain taken into brewery and distillery, thence to set out on its work of destruction—to qualify candidates for admission to jail and madhouse. Listen—in wartime—to the din of the industrial activities of the nations, as a hundred million² men and women toil, day in, day out, at the fashioning of weapons of destruction; as they blend the high explosive, and prepare the liquid fire and

¹ The report of the Commissioners of the Anti-Saloon League of America, in August 1918, shows what can be done in Britain when the drink question is taken seriously in hand. Will this work be made permanent, or will the Trade be too strong for us?

² The majority of the employed populations of the belligerent countries have probably been employed, directly or indirectly, on war work.

the poison gas. And then reflect that man's greatest discoveries and highest achievements have been consecrated to *this*, that by our cleverness and our inventions we have unchained powers of hell mightier than ourselves, with the results seen where twenty millions of men blast, and burn, and poison one another to death.

When one calmly compares man's opportunities with his achievements, and reflects on what he has done with the talents committed to him, the marvel is that we can still look one another in the face without our cheeks burning with shame; the boasting that is still heard all around us seems as the insane babble of a lunatic asylum. And when mankind dares to look honestly on the facts, with a firm resolve to confess the truth as those facts reveal it, then at last every mouth will be stopped, and the whole world own itself guilty before God.

4. DARWIN AND EVOLUTION.

It seems to be fairly evident that the belief in the general upward trend of man is neither of great age, nor universal; it is a modern idea, and a Western one. It is, in short, the faith of Christendom, though not of Christianity. It appears to be largely the product of theories built up on the ideas first popularly promulgated by Darwin. The popular notion of Darwinism, however—the loose set of ideas held under the general name of Evolution—is really opposed to the teaching of Darwin. The current idea of evolution may be expressed in words we have already used; it is a belief in the general upward trend of man. It is generally supposed that a principle exists in nature which persistently works for the improving and perfecting of organic beings, and their development into a higher type. It is usually assumed that there is some kind of creative intelligence at work; in any case, a *plan* is presumed—a *necessity* of progress. It is presumed that whoever—or whatever—is responsible for the universe is pursuing a *purpose*—that a goal is consciously aimed at—that organic beings are *predestined*

to develop, and man among them. This principle is supposed to be ever striving upwards; its ultimate goal is perfection, or at least the production of beings of a very high order. Beginning with the lowliest forms of life, it works ever in the direction of development, step by step, ever from lowlier to less lowly, from high to higher, by imperceptible degrees perhaps, yet with a purpose never failing through the ages. It is believed that, even if man himself is not to be surpassed, yet man as he is now is certainly to be surpassed. For the modern teaching carries the theory of evolution into society, and professes to trace our upward steps from the state of the savage, and to foresee a glorious destiny for man as he is yet to be.

But Darwin himself *expressly denies* any such essential upward trend; he takes pains to combat the assumption of any upward striving principle in nature; in fact, his two best-known works appear to have been written quite as much with a view to establishing this point as to securing acceptance for the principle of evolution generally. His teaching is that slight variations in organic beings have occurred from time to time spontaneously, or fortuitously, and he points to the fact that some men have longer or shorter noses than others, or larger or smaller heads, to show that such variations still occur. When any such variation has tended to give an organism any slight advantage over others, such organism has been more likely to survive, and to perpetuate its species and its peculiarity. This process repeated an almost infinite number of times through millions of years has, he thinks, with the aid of sexual selection and other minor factors, produced all the innumerable species of plants and animals, including the "ape-like progenitor" of men and monkeys, and finally man himself.

"We have *no good evidence*," says Darwin, "of the existence in organic beings of an innate tendency towards progressive development." "There is no need to invoke any internal force beyond the tendency to ordinary variability." "There is *no evidence* of the existence of any

law of necessary development." He sets himself in opposition to "those who believe in an innate and necessary law of development," and expressly contests the views of Nägeli, who, he says, "believes in an innate tendency towards progressive and more perfect development."

Darwin even goes so far as to say that, *in view of the evidence*, the objections urged against evolution might be valid, if by "evolution" is meant this general and necessary upward tendency; "but," he repeats, "our theory includes no fixed law of development."

So far with regard to nature generally. But turning now to man, or society, his conclusions furnish no grounds for the popular theory of evolution, the theory of a natural and essential trend towards improvement. He quotes Bagehot to the effect that we are apt to look at progress as normal in human society, but that *history refutes this*. He also quotes with approval another high authority, Sir Henry Maine, who says, "the greatest part of mankind has never shown a particle of desire that its civil institutions should be improved." Darwin himself calls attention to the effect of the activities of the "Holy Inquisition," which, for more than a century, "selected with extreme care the freest and boldest men in order to burn or imprison them," and quotes Sir C. Lyell's testimony to the evil effects of that institution in having, *through selection* (Darwin's own principle), *lowered* the general standard of intelligence in Europe.

Darwin had no illusions as to the effect on the race of a standing army, under which, he says, "the finest young men are taken by the conscription or are enlisted. They are thus exposed to early death during war, are often tempted into vice, and are prevented from marrying during the prime of life. On the other hand, the shorter and feebler men, with poor constitutions, are left at home, and consequently have a much better chance of marrying and propagating their kind."

As in the case with animals, so with man. Darwin refers with disapprobation to the tacit assumption so often made that there is "some innate tendency towards

continued development in mind and body." He suggests that the Greeks—who, it might be thought from their high development, should have stocked the whole of Europe, instead of dying out as they did—possibly retrograded "from extreme sensuality, for they did not succumb until they were enervated and corrupt to the very core." An apt commentary this, by the way, on the stupid "swank" which leads most writers and speakers, secular or sacred, to indulge in panegyrics every time they mention ancient Greece—its art, its literature or its religion—in spite of the ineffable and unnatural filth with which these reek.

Neither in Darwin's *Origin of Species* nor in his *Descent of Man* do we find one word in favour of the popular "meliorist" theory of evolution; not one forward glance, but ever the backward look. And he does not even look back with a view to discovering grounds of hope for the future, unless it be in the following somewhat dubious words with which he closes the last-mentioned work:

"The fact of man's having risen to the very summit of the organic scale, instead of having been aboriginally placed there, may give him hope for a higher destiny in the future. But we are not here concerned with hopes or fears, only with the truth as far as our reason permits us to discover it; and I have given the evidence to the best of my ability, . . . that man . . . still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin."

It is clear, therefore, that those who believe in the pleasant theory of man's natural and continual tendency towards improvement—that his inevitable destiny, spite of occasional lapses and set-backs, is ever upward—are mistaken in thinking they have any support from Darwin. It is vain to hope to find in the *Descent of Man* any ground for the modern belief in the *Ascent* of Man.

Neither is there any ground for such a belief in all we know of man from history and from observation.

Now we would ask the reader to consider the question. May it not be that the objections to the popular views

of evolution which, according to Darwin, "might be valid in view of the evidence," are equally valid against *any* view of evolution as applied to man? If the evidence rules out any assumption of an inevitable law of progress, does it not equally rule out any assumption that man's history has been a record of progress at all? May not Darwinism and the more popular evolutionary theories have to be relegated to the same category? It may be thought audacious to question such an authority as Darwin, but, inasmuch as the latter addresses himself to the reading public, it is to be presumed that even a humble member of that public may declare himself unconvinced. It is in fact difficult to understand how any thoughtful reader, with the power of independent reflection, can accept the conclusions put forward in his books, especially as, in numerous cases, the evidence he adduces to prove particular points could be taken, by a sounder process of reasoning, to prove the opposite.

We take it, however, that many who read do *not* reflect, but simply read for information which they assume to be true before they start; for it is the orthodox belief to-day, and the man who claims to be educated must include Darwinism in his reading. But the belief is equally held by thousands who have never read a word of Darwin. For the moment, the evolutionary theory is in the ascendant, as other theories have been and will be. People have breathed it in as they breathe the atmosphere around them. The mere fact that a theory is popularly held, however, carries little weight with the thoughtful, for they know that few of the people holding the popular view do so as a result of any study or reflection or exercise of mind whatever. Few people show any great anxiety to know the real truth for its own sake, or will take any trouble to ascertain it. The majority are merely anxious to know what is considered the "correct thing" to believe, and when they have ascertained what that is they adopt it and hold it as their "belief." The desire is not to be right, but to be considered right—to be up to date in our beliefs, though this may mean

being merely the victims of the fallacies of the particular age in which we happen to live.

If Darwinism were a *science*, it might require some courage to resist its conclusions. Ever since scientists took to checking their theories, and discovering new facts, by calculation and experiment, and especially by the critical test of the balances, their main conclusions have as a rule been *demonstrably* true. But Darwinism is not a science in the best sense of the word. It is more correct to regard it, like the maddening Malthusianism on which it is admittedly founded, as a system of philosophy. The main facts of science are agreed by all scientists, and processes based on those facts are found to work satisfactorily, whereas philosophers and philosophies are almost all mutually contradictory, and often found to be discordant with the facts of life. Many of the most famous philosophers have spent half their time and energies in denouncing the equally famous philosophers who preceded or were contemporary with them. 3287

The *real* teaching of Darwin—what may be called the “brutalist,” as opposed to the “meliorist” theory—is held far more correctly by the Germans, and of course by those who are better-read in our own country. Either view is worked for two equally fatal purposes—to excuse all that is evil in man by referring back to his bestial origin, and to flatter his vanity with the promise of what a fine fellow he is one day to become. Mr. Chalmers Mitchell, Secretary to the Zoological Society, himself an evolutionist, calls attention to the unwarranted manner in which writers on all sorts of subjects drag in the analogies of evolution in support of their various views. “The augurs of Imperial Rome,” he remarks, “advised on grave matters of state after inspecting the entrails of animals, or marking the flight of birds. Modern philosophers explain and justify human conduct after a visit to the monkey house at the Zoological Gardens, or from observations on the family life of rabbits.” It is on the *real* teaching of Darwin that Germany’s modern “philosophers” have admittedly built up their brutalistic

theories, culminating in the vehement justification of war and massacre as a "biological necessity"—a fit and natural outcome of this "Worship of the Beast."

5. THE SAVAGE AND THE GERMAN.

It is not to be wondered at that, though Darwin believes we are descended from an "ape-like progenitor," through the savage, he can find no indication of how we emerged from the savage state. "The problem of the first advance of savages towards civilization," he says, "is at present much too difficult to be solved."

This idea, which is of course also the popular idea, that "we were all savages once," that the disgusting state of the Hottentot, the Fuegian or the Australian aborigine, is the "natural" state of man, and a necessary step in his ascent from the animal, is one from which the thoughtful mind revolts. It is not "natural" that any man should be as depraved as we know many civilized men to be—much less that the people as a whole should wallow in the frightful practices which constitute the normal life of the debased Fuegian. Darwin assumes that our "ape-like progenitor" would be kind to his "wife," decent in his habits, and generally living in accordance with the nature of his being, in the sphere to which he was fitted, as is the case with other animals. On what principle of upward progression was it necessary for this noble creature to develop into the savage, of whose instincts and habits Darwin draws such a terrible picture? When we think of the splendid development of many of the animals, each perfect after its kind, each fulfilling the law of its being, and then read the evidence of Darwin and other close observers on the appalling bestialities habitually indulged in by so many of the savage races, and the utter absence among them of any desire for, or tendency towards, improvement, what ground is there for assuming that the savage is a sort of "half-way house" on the upward path from beast to Christian?

And what support does such an assumption lend to the doctrine of the "survival of the *fittest*"?

Evidence of a savage race, without outside influence, spontaneously raising itself to the civilized state, seems to be lacking, whereas there is considerable evidence, in their languages, in relics of architecture and the arts, and in actual recorded history, of nations falling from the civilized state to that of the lowest savages. When such fall has not been the result of pressure from without, the cause of the decline has doubtless been a moral one. And moral factors are at work to-day which have brought us to such a crisis, that the civilized world may well be on the eve of relapsing into actual and literal barbarism. Modern civilization seems to have worked itself out for all it is worth. It is like an over-blown peony; it is in the last stage of Esop's conceited frog.

Let us consider first the case of the nation which was furthest advanced in typically modern tendencies—the nation of Germany—not forgetting meanwhile our own sins and our own danger. Probably no nation has been so obsessed with the thought of its progress and its future place in the world. And yet, in spite of their inordinate self-consciousness, it would seem that no people are less capable of forming a just estimate of themselves, or of realizing the road on which they have been travelling. No nation has ever been more swollen with the idea of its own wisdom, and yet to-day the most intolerable fools that cumber God's fair earth are the Germans. For more than a generation, every step which they have fondly believed to be a step forward in the path of civilization and progress has been a step backward towards barbarism, every climb towards the "superman" a fall nearer to the savage, till, to-day, they successfully rival the savage both in ferocity and in stupidity.

In spite of all that the war should have taught us, most people are still unable to conceive the possibility of a phenomenon occurring which differs from the phenomena they are familiar with in their own limited experience. To such it may seem incredible that that great

nation should ever lose the material advantages they possess, and revert to the state of the savage, not only morally—that they have done already—but literally. And yet, unless arrested on their downward career, this may well be their destiny. Material science cannot save them, any more than the arts of ancient nations saved them. One of their own writers, Professor Werner Sombart, has said, “Technical science and inward culture, or even human happiness, have little connection with each other. In the midst of vast technical achievements, it is possible for humanity to sink back into complete barbarism.” The mechanical appliances of civilization must not be confounded with civilization itself, which is moral. The missionary does not obtain converts by wireless telegraphy or by aerial navigation, but by spiritual forces. He deals first with the moral side of the man, and, until the latter agrees to give up his abominable practices, refuses to baptize him as a convert. All the rest follows on the first upward step. In the same way the complete fall to degradation may be expected to follow on the initial *downward* step of a people which *chooses* abominable practices instead of surrendering them, and which formally and officially proclaims its abandonment of the appeal to moral sanctions.

We seriously believe that we may see Germany resorting to cannibalism within the next few years. Consider for a moment how easily this may come about. They were highly offended when it was reported among the Allies that they were extracting fat for commercial purposes from the bodies of the slain. They denied the story, and the question of its truth turns on whether the word “Kadaver” was used for human bodies, or only for the carcasses of animals. We are not in a position to press the point, and we give them the full benefit of the doubt. We are beginning, however, to know our Germans by now. Supposing, in the next war, they should be much more hardly pressed than they were in the last, and that it occurs to them that the bodies of the slain do contain considerable potential stores of this necessary article. From

what we know of them, would they have to descend much lower than they have done already in order to avail themselves of this supply? Necessity knows no law—at any rate for a German. Their professors would proclaim aloud what a marvellous people they were for having invented the process. Their pastors, who are capable of anything, would raise pæans of praise for this marvellous provision of Providence; while all would join in protesting that it was only to be used for industrial purposes. But every one who knows anything of the fat industry knows that, once a crude article gets on the market, it will be bought and used by manufacturers for every purpose to which it can be economically turned by any process of purification or admixture. We leave the rest to the reason and imagination of our readers.

It may be thought we are ungenerous to our enemies in suggesting the possibility of Germans descending to such a depth before they are actually guilty of it; but it might be wise for once to use our reason for the purpose of anticipating, from their past performances, what they are likely to do next. Had we so employed our reason in the past we might have been spared many of the unpleasant surprises that we have received in the course of the war.

We are not in favour of the stodgy orthodoxy which teaches that a man cannot be saved unless he accepts a particular interpretation of the “six days” of Genesis. But we believe that God created man a responsible being. Not “civilized” in our modern sense—that would have been too unkind—but reasonable and capable. But many do not so believe; they regard man as the descendant of the beasts, and consider that there is no essential break between our “ape-like ancestors” and ourselves. If this view be right, then the case of the German is even worse than we have made it, for an essential part of the evolutionary theory is that progress is *not* inevitable. Darwin taught that *degeneration* is possible, and is in fact a frequent phenomenon. And some of the most favourite examples in support of Darwinism presented by popular

evolutionist writers are instances of degeneration rather than of evolution, as in those cases where they trace, from still existing rudiments, the previous existence of organs now entirely lost. It would seem reasonable, therefore, to conclude from this that if, for instance, the lizard and blindworm can lose their "pineal eye," and man his ability to run on all fours and to swing from a tree by his tail, then man may yet lose all that makes him a man, and revert to the animal. In the words of Shakespeare, we may yet :

all be turned to barnacles, or apes
with foreheads villainous low.

In the *Water Babies*, Charles Kingsley tells the children of a tribe of creatures who had misused their capacities as men, and reverted to monkeys, and the recent emergence of ape-like proclivities among the Germans is a symptom which, if Darwinism were true, might well fill them with alarm for their future.

One of the writer's earliest recollections is of standing as a boy in the ape-house at the "Zoo," watching the antics of these strange creatures. A visitor was teasing one of them by offering it an orange, which could not be got between the bars of the cage. The animal was making frantic attempts to pull it through, and working himself into a rage as he found his efforts futile. At last he gave it up, jumped back with a scream to his trapeze, gnashed his teeth at his tormentor, did a "morning hate" in a dozen frenzied jumps, and suddenly sprang to where I, who had done nothing, stood pressing my face against the bars, and lacerated *my* cheek from temple to chin with his sharp nails. In view of recent performances on the part of the Germans, can it be wondered that I have often thought lately how truly *German* this was ?

And yet this is not written for the sake of the Germans. It is written for our sakes ; for in too many things before the war we had been absorbing German ideas, and imbibing the German spirit. We were not so far gone as they ; that is not suggested—as a matter of fact

there were even essential differences. We were incapable—thank God—of making a treacherous attack with poison gas, relying on the enemy's observance of the laws of war to leave him unequipped for defence or retaliation. Even at the risk of suffering a tactical disadvantage, we were not capable of massacring women, children and wounded by torpedo. We had not fallen so low as even to contemplate the thought of waging war by the foul methods by which Germany has shocked humanity. Yet it is only by realizing that these things are the inevitable outcome of previously much admired traits in the German spirit—materialism, self-worship, covetousness, vaunting of human wisdom, lust for dominion, and the whole brutal modern outlook on life—in which Germany has led the way—and by taking the warning to heart as concerns ourselves, that we can hope to avoid the danger of treading any further on the road that they have travelled, and of finding ourselves one day where they are now.

The reader may be disposed to question whether the above mentioned traits were ever "much admired," but these traits are not usually called by the harsh names we have given them. They are generally represented by much more euphonious expressions, and we have shown our admiration by imitation. The danger of the age is not Prussianism, it is Germanism—swinishness—however decked out in finery. It is the cultivation of the hog life. With all its horror, and all its unutterable loss, the war may yet prove our salvation. For it should open our eyes to see that evil things are evil, and can only bear evil fruits; and if the exhibition of this naked devilry inspires us to fight against it, *root* as well as branch, then in so doing we may yet save our souls, and save our manhood.

6. "SCENES FROM A PRIVATE MADHOUSE."

It would be unwise to attempt to prophesy as to what lies ahead for the human race, for that will largely depend

on the choice we may make. It is for us rather, following a careful study of causes and effects, to alter our course in such wise as shall seem calculated to remove the causes of our present troubles, avert impending calamities and give promise of a brighter future. Unless we are prepared to do this, it does not need the gift of prophecy to foresee the gathering blackness ahead. We shall not revert to the ape. Man was made man, and can never be anything else. He has to account for himself as man, and to bear, as man, the consequences of his actions as man. But though he cannot fall to the ape there is plenty of evidence to prove that he can fall very low. In the words of Goethe, he can become :

far beastlier than any beast.

And looking at facts from the point of view of simple reason and observation, without reference to special divine interposition, the relapse to barbarism appears to be the most threatening contingency. First the moral collapse of government, which has already set in ; then, unless we take immediate warning, and immediate steps to save ourselves, the dissolving of the delicate cement of mutual confidence which holds society together—anarchy, and barbarism.

No age has had such privileges and opportunities as the present, or failed so miserably to profit by them. No age has had such light, or sinned so grievously against that light. The more the miracle of creation is revealed, the more men flout the Creator, and seek to turn Him out of His own universe. The more the existence of immutable laws throughout the natural realm is proved, the more they give themselves to lawlessness in the moral and spiritual realm. The marvellous delicacy and beauty of the human body is increasingly proved by every new research, showing it to be no unfit temple even for the Holy Ghost Himself—and it is turned into a temple of demons. The truth proclaimed nineteen hundred years ago—that no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself, is being demonstrated as never before by every

investigation into sociology—and yet the impossible is being attempted, and the cult of self is almost exalted into an established religion. The same science proves that, if sins like those of the Cities of the Plain, and of Pompeii and Herculaneum, are not always visited with fire from heaven, they yet lead to inevitable disaster; yet we ignore the lesson, restraint is being thrown off with a mad abandonment, and every possibility of sensual gratification is exploited to the full, and pandered to by those who make a living out of the vices and weaknesses of their fellows. Literature, and the graphic and histrionic arts, are being made the handmaids of vice. Novelists and playwrights are honoured, and treated with deference, whom any decent father of sons or daughters would be justified in horsewhipping in the public streets. Prostitution, in the true sense of the word, is not to be gauged by the numbers of women walking the streets—though they are legion. This prostitution of the intellect and talents is as real, and as shameful, as that of the body. Like that, too, it has its bullies, its panders and its procurers, and, like that, it leads inevitably to ruin and death.

The writers and purveyors of pornographic literature, and the apologists for every type of indulgence in the things that are rotting us through and through, have a short way with the advocates of the clean life. They reply to every plea for decency with a reference to "Mrs. Grundy," and this is supposed to be a complete answer. The insinuation is that, if a man objects to obscenity, he must perforce belong to a peculiar class of emasculated beings, without natural affections and without natural feelings, dead to art, poetry, beauty, "love"; or he is a dour and forbidding spoil-sport, a "Philistine" who would deny to others all the fair things of life which his own sour nature prevents him from enjoying himself. The apologist's friends, the talented cartoonists of the gutter press, represent him as an effeminate, clerical-looking individual, with a mangy top-hat, bulgy umbrella and crinkly trousers. (By what inspiration of genius

did these brilliant artists discover that this latter touch conveys a suggestion of humour to the shallow mind?). But the man who has the truest right to protest against the present lowering of the standard of decency and of sexual honour is the one who is truly a *man*, with a full equipment of the masculine qualities. He is a man with the sex instinct fully and properly developed on the spiritual as well as the natural side. Such development issues in chivalry, that fast disappearing virtue. He surrounds woman with a halo of reverence, or recognizes rather the halo with which God Himself has encircled the head of every pure woman. His sex instinct leads him to find his joy in treating her with deference and with reverence. So far from being a "Philistine," he is a man of infinitely finer texture than his traducers. He is in love with life, in love with beauty, and in love with love. He is in love too with woman, for he is a man; and this is the cause of his wrath against those who have lost everything of the true man to become "beastlier than beasts," and seek to degrade woman to their own level. For, in spite of their lying sentimentality, spite of their affected "artistic temperament," and their æsthetic pose, the inspiration of these filthy dreamers, apart from greed of gain, is sheer animalism.

Yet the sin—the sin of sins—of this age is not sexual immorality; it is not drunkenness. These and kindred sins abound, yet it remains true that many a publican and harlot will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, while many who pass for righteous will be cast into outer darkness. The crying sin of to-day is *exploitation*. The sins and weaknesses of the people are exploited under our modern civilization on a scale hitherto undreamed of. Only in these modern days of "progress" have men on the make discovered what an illimitable source of revenue is to be tapped by this means. It is the sin of *pandering*, and pandering on the Napoleonic scale. Men have sunk their capital in it, and created powerful vested interests. The poor weakling who is caught in the snare, or who succumbs to the lures spread for him

on every hand, may end his days in prison or workhouse, or be quietly and decently put out of sight to die in infirmary or asylum; but the men who have traded on him, and waxed fat in so doing, are courted and fawned upon by their neighbours, and "kow-towed" to by the tradesmen and others who seek to bask in the sunshine of their ill-gotten wealth. When was the real landlord of a West End brothel ever brought to justice? When were the wife-beatings, the child-starvings or other crimes of the drunkard ever brought home to the men who have traded on his appetites? What author or cinema proprietor was ever adequately punished for first insinuating into the mind of lad or girl the thing that has proved their undoing? If the drunkard is to lose his immortal soul, what shall become of the drunkard-makers? And what shall become of the souls of those "Lords Spiritual" and other supporters in the House of Lords who, on the plea of "vested interests," have ever been the implacable enemies of measures dictated by mercy and directed to the helping and the saving of the people?

There is hardly a sin, hardly a human vice or weakness, which is not commercially exploited to-day. There is hardly an abuse we can seek to reform without coming up against the fact that some one "has money in it." The trade of the pander flourishes as never before. Make a tour of the theatre district of London, and examine, not the advertisements of plays and revues—they are disquieting enough—but the windows of the shops that abound in the neighbourhood. If you are not too innocent to understand, or too hardened to care, you will be shocked and alarmed. Yet these things are only one type of the exploitation of human nature that is permeating almost every sphere throughout the land. And virtues are being exploited as well as vices. It has been remarked of a notorious weekly journalist that he knows how to exploit for his own ends both the best and the worst instincts of the people. It does not matter what it is, fleshly weakness, human vanity or greed, patriotism or religion; a trade springs up in it. Everything is com-

mercialized, everything exploited, by those who have made the grand discovery that people can usually be induced to pay for what they want.

In later chapters we shall endeavour to examine in more detail some of the features of the life of society which call for special consideration, but our object is not so much to prove individual points as to arouse the spirit of enquiry—to lead the reader to reflect for himself. What hope for humanity is there on its present lines? The writer cannot, of course, review the whole scene of modern civilization, even apart from the war; but, with all respect be it suggested, let the reader drop all current cant and complacency, let him drop all the comfortable doctrines that he may have insensibly imbibed as to man's goodness, and all assumptions as to his inevitable upward tendency. Let him make up his mind, perhaps for the first time, to look at the bare facts in all their nakedness, to survey this panorama of "scenes from a private madhouse" that passes for civilization. It has too long been the custom, when we survey mankind, to do so through the rose-coloured glasses of our flattering theories and assumptions. Now let us drop them.

Before dropping them altogether, however, it will be interesting to give one glance at man as he appears through these same rose-coloured glasses. We will take a glimpse through the tinted spectacles of our modern prophet, Mr. H. G. Wells.

In his *Mr. Britling Sees it Through*, Mr. Britling—or Mr. Wells—is constrained to the reflection, "how kind and pleasant a race mankind can be. Until the wild asses of nationalism came kicking and slaying amidst them, until greed and malignity poison their minds, until the fools with the high explosives blow that elemental goodness into shrieks of hate and splashes of blood. How kindly men are—up to the very instant of their cruelties."

This is practically to suggest that the war was not the result of causes, or, at any rate, that it had no cause but just itself. Really, Mr. Wells, this does

not indicate a very high degree of perspicacity—for a Prophet.

Now let us take off our glasses, and look at Mr. Britling—and Mr. Wells. Mr. Britling seems to be presented to us as a typical ordinary man of the comfortable classes. While living amicably with his second wife—a faultless spouse—he has had *liaisons* with eight different women. He is surrounded by agreeable friends, and never once does it seem to occur to any of these to treat him with anything but respect, or to regard his conduct as anything very reprehensible. He motors out at night to visit his latest “flame,” and the incident is not even commented on. If this is a true picture of a middle-class household, then the darkness of Christendom is darker even than we had suspected. But we believe it is not a true picture. We believe Mr. Wells has perpetrated a greater libel on his fellow-men than the present writer will be charged with even by those who may be most resentful of his criticisms of the age.

In the end Mr. Britling finds “God.” The Spirit of God comes to him—possesses him. He “knows” it is God. This God is a finite, struggling being like ourselves. He is not the maker of heaven and earth. On the contrary, he is a God who struggles against Nature and necessity. Mr. Wells has forgotten that the need in our minds for a God is the felt necessity for a First Cause. We want to know who *is* responsible for the universe, and it is no use for Mr. Wells to put us off with his underlings. In inventing a God to his own fancy Mr. Wells has left unsatisfied the very instinct which made us seek for a God. We have still to find Him, the God of Nature and of necessity.

However, God—Mr. Wells’s God—comes to Mr. Britling, and in some undefined way comforts him for the loss of his son in the war, and soothes his mind, which is tormented by the problem of human suffering and stupidity. So far as we can gather, this “comfort” appears to have been borrowed by Mr. Wells from a popular and none too virile modern religious sentimentalism. But this

Spirit of God never seems to suggest to Mr. Britling that eight-fold adultery may have something to do with human troubles. He never suggests to him that it is not "kindly" to leave his wife and spend the night with another woman, neither does he produce any definite regret or desire for improvement in Mr. Britling's mind. He is a very nice God—he does not blame any one—he only convinces Mr. Britling that *he* is to take part in the establishment of a new order upon the earth, presumably without giving up his adulteries.

Mr. Wells seems to suggest that, except for swash-buckling, Jingoism and *nationalism* (!) there is not much wrong with us. Apart from these aberrations he appears to think we should do very well. Surely when a man can survey the appalling spectacle of modern life, and be blind to the fact that the injustices, the falsities, the crimes and lusts, which constitute so large a part of it, are the cause of the things he laments; when he can talk of establishing a new order on earth which is to retain practically all the old sins except Prussianism, when he cannot see that public troubles arise out of private sins, surely it is time for him to seek some other business than that of Prophet.

It may be objected that, in his earlier writings, Mr. Wells *does* recognize other evils besides Prussianism and its kind. But Mr. Wells changes, and we assume that *Mr. Britling Sees it Through* represents the stage in Mr. Wells's spiritual pilgrimage which he had reached when he wrote it a year or two ago. We have only read one of the works issued by him since *Mr. Britling*, so we do not know exactly where he stands now. It is reassuring to learn, however, on the authority of *Mr. Punch*, that owing to the war Mr. Wells will in future only change his views every three months, instead of fortnightly, as hitherto.

Our own view is the exact opposite of the Britling view. We trust we are not lacking in geniality. We recognize the existence of a great deal of kindness, friendship, truth, honour, unselfishness, and even lifelong faithful-

ness and self-sacrifice. If we could not believe in these we should want to die. Still we believe that we must look to the appalling prevalence of the *contraries* of these things as *the* explanation of our troubles. It should not be difficult to construct a kind of genealogical tree, which should trace the direct lineal descent of Prussianism, Imperialism, militarism, clericalism, and generally of unjust laws and a cruel social system, as well as of international crimes and war, from the operation of the selfish instincts in the human heart—the hearts of ordinary people, *including the people who are themselves the victims of these evils*. We do not propose to work out our argument exactly on these lines, but we invite our readers to explore the situation with us.

Let us try—though we know it is difficult—to look at the situation as if we had no preconceived views or prejudices, to judge as though we were now introduced to mankind for the first time, and were permitted for the first time to know as much as we do of man's motives and actions, judging him with brutal simplicity, having no sort of partiality in his favour or interest in the verdict. What sort of future can we predict for him if he continues on the lines on which he has been proceeding? We must take into account the immensely increased powers for good and evil that modern conditions have placed in his hands, and the use he has made of them so far, and ask ourselves, *from the facts alone*, what use he is likely to make of them in the future; what is likely to become of him? We are not urging here any mere orthodox doctrine of original sin; we are not denying almost infinite potentialities of good in man. We are asking the reader to consider for himself whether, by all the signs, man is on the right road.

If we can induce the reader to raise and pursue this enquiry for himself, we shall not only have prepared him for the arguments which follow; we shall already have effected our principal object. Anything further we can say will only be with a view to assisting the reader in his enquiry.

II

THE CAUSE

1. BRITAIN AND GERMANY.

"If we had adopted conscription before 1914 we should never have had the war."

"If we had doubled our navy ten years ago, Germany would have never dared to challenge us."

"If we had had a protective tariff, we should have been in a stronger position, and should have beaten the Germans in the first year."

Secret diplomacy was the cause of the war—and also popular government. Capitalism was the cause—and so was the modern socialistic tendency. Militarism—and also the opposition to compulsory military service.

Our injustice to Ireland caused the war, by leading Germany to count on her disaffection; our mistaken kindness to Ireland caused it, by encouraging sedition.

And so on, according to individual predilections. In short, people believe any lie the devil tells them, and repeat it after him as docilely as the Germans repeat a cry suggested to them by their masters. And the foregoing are only a few of the taradiddles with which he deceives us, and keeps us off the track of the true cause of our troubles.

His game is to keep us for ever arguing about *secondary* causes, and to head us off any enquiry into primary ones. We of course admit that secondary questions have their importance, and in this connection we would like to say that none of our remarks imply any doubt about the

rightness of Britain's action in entering the war. We do not merely say that she was "justified" in so doing; it was more than a case of justification, it was a real act of righteousness—one of the noblest impulses in her history. No sane and honest man, who has studied the available sources of information, believes we went to war "on the make." Some among our fellow-countrymen, it is true, have exhibited very unworthy and reprehensible motives and aspirations in connection with the prosecution and aims of the war, and thus brought the gravest discredit on the cause; but they are not the nation, they are the foes within the camp.

We did not go to war—primarily, at least—even to defend ourselves. Such an object might have been a legitimate one, but there would not have been anything particularly chivalrous about it. Nothing, however, can alter the grand historical fact that Britain, being free to choose, did choose to enter the war, and to put the life and fortune of the nation unreservedly to stake, for a noble and unselfish cause. No gallant officer, preferring death to dishonour on the stricken field, ever chose more nobly than did the British Government of 1914, with the conscience of the nation behind it.

We are, *essentially*, a peace-loving people, despite all that our traducers may allege. But, on the Third of August 1914, Britain was *compelled* to take a decision. The crisis was not of her seeking—she had, in fact, done her poor best to avoid it. But the crisis came. The temptation to put "safety first" was great; had she yielded to that temptation, her ultimate moral and spiritual downfall would have been assured. But in that moment of her supreme trial, the better side of her nature asserted itself, and she put *honour* first. We use the word *honour* in its British sense; we do not mean reputation or prestige, we mean the *obligation*—not the *glory*. And the fact that a nation could and did take so tremendous a decision, in such a spirit, is one which encourages us still to hope for humanity, in spite of other facts which might incline us to despair. Our enemies

have sought to confuse the issue, but, when all the sound and fury are over, there will still stand the evidence. There will stand, for instance, the report of the fateful interview between Sir Edward Goschen, faithfully representing the true soul of Britain, and Dr. von Bethmann Hollweg, representing with equal fidelity the real soul of Germany :

The Chancellor : For strategical reasons, it is a matter of life and death to Germany to advance through Belgium and violate her neutrality.

The Ambassador : In the same way, it is, so to speak, a matter of life and death for the honour of Great Britain that she should keep her solemn engagement and do her utmost to defend Belgium's neutrality if attacked.

The Chancellor : But at what price will this compact have been kept ?

The Ambassador : I would beg your Excellency to observe that *the fear of consequences can hardly be regarded as an excuse for breaking solemn engagements.*

The war was already well in progress, and thousands of lives had been sacrificed, when the writer first saw the foregoing report. As he read the words of the British Ambassador, it was with difficulty that he restrained the tears—tears of thankfulness and pride ; and the prayer of Nehemiah arose involuntarily from his heart :

“Remember us, Oh our God, for this, and spare us, according to the greatness of Thy mercy.”

The enquiry into the rights and wrongs of the quarrel with Germany, however, must not be confused with the enquiry into the moral condition of mankind generally and its corporate responsibility for wars and other public evils. Britain doubtless took the only right course so far as regards the particular incident of the war, and we are far from wishing to minimize the significance of that tremendous incident. But it does not follow that Britain's own condition gives no cause for alarm, or that the things we set out to fight against have not secured a footing here. In Germany “the Beast” is enthroned ; to all intents and purposes his worship is the established religion. But

he has also his votaries *here*, his priests and his missionaries, his shrines where he is worshipped and served. We are like Israel in the days of the Kings, fighting against enemies whose god was Baal, while the cult of this abomination was more or less openly practised within their own borders.

2. THE ROOT CAUSE.

We have to consider whether all the nations did not contribute their part, in varying degrees, to the building up of a world in which it was possible and natural for such a war to occur. There is abundant cause for the alarm and apprehension that are rife, not merely on account of the devastation of the war, but also concerning the root causes which make war possible, and which make possible the thousand other horrors from which mankind perennially suffers. Many are the theories put forward as to what is really wrong with humanity at bottom. Something deeper than militarism or secret diplomacy there must be, something deeper than our economic systems, or the "pressure of populations." Something down in the depths, the hidden springs from which all our "systems" flow, and which, unless their sources are discovered and dealt with, will yet again gush out and inundate the world in a new flood of horror.

The theories usually offered as an explanation of the great cataclysm, as well as of previous evils that have afflicted us, are vitiated by an underlying fault, which persists throughout with an apparently incurable obstinacy. They are vitiated by *human vanity*. The vanity of the human race had a considerable share in bringing about the war, and that same vanity now either prompts explanations of human troubles which are utterly at variance with patent facts, or causes our leaders and teachers to ignore or to hide the one great fact which explains everything, if we are going to consider primary—as opposed to merely secondary—causes. This fact is that *moral obliquity*, in all its varied and subtle manifestations, is

the cause, and the sole cause, of the welter of misery in which Christendom has found itself in the twentieth century of its existence. In considering this question Germany may for the moment be left out of account. Had the nations *generally*, in their internal and their international affairs, been guided primarily and mainly by reasonably moral instincts, the motives for war would not have existed, war would have been impossible—and *Germany would have been impossible*. For the great disgrace and condemnation of the present age is that it has produced Germany.

This moral issue is not a theological question, but a practical one; not a question for ecclesiastics to preach fine-spun sermons on, but one for the people to consider and thresh out for themselves; yet it is one which is virtually never faced and dealt with fairly and squarely. With a pusillanimity which is as deplorable as it is almost universal, our writers and publicists, and practically all the well-meaning people who offer to instruct us how to put the world right, persistently evade this all-important issue, or, if they touch on it at all, do so only to dismiss it with rhetoric. Yet the issue must be faced. It is impossible to hope for any permanent deliverance from the present nightmare till it *is* faced.

We are not here making a new charge against mankind—not seeking to condemn the world, but to save it. Nor are we making any charge at all on our own authority. Though constantly ignored, or denied by implication, the indictment has been hanging over our heads for ages, and the evidence has been steadily accumulating century by century. And the indictment *has never been answered*. It has not been brought lightly, or by irresponsible persons. A religion which is nominally accepted by most of the belligerent nations; witnesses whose words have come down to us through the centuries, and whose lives and deaths were a testimony to the things they preached; a Teacher—yea, I say unto you, and more than a Teacher—before the perfection of whose wisdom and the beauty of whose character all men bow, and acknowledge He had

no equal ; all agree in declaring where the trouble really lies, and in pointing to the remedy. The religion is still accepted in form, the words of the witnesses are praised for their beauty and poetry, and sung to entranced audiences ; the name of the Teacher is inscribed on the banners of the nations, yet human vanity obstinately refuses any real acceptance by the bulk of Christendom of the truth enshrined in their teachings, and bars any honest attempt to adopt a remedy based on that truth. From a thousand presses, contributions to the great discussion of the causes of the war, and the prevention of its recurrence, are pouring forth ; but, with a fatal unanimity, they all agree in evading this painful investigation into a proposition which has been put forward with more moral weight and authority, and by more unimpeachable witnesses, that any other view which has ever been presented to our consideration. Our economic system is blamed, doubtless with perfect justice so far ; but our economic system, as all our systems, has arisen out of what we *are* ; it is in fact the *expression* of what we are, and forms a serious count in the indictment. Monarchy is blamed, often with good cause, but it is forgotten that kings are men, and evil kings are evil men. And their vices would be impossible in a world which was generally decent ; they are only made possible by the foul broods that pander to their masters' vanity and lusts. In reading some of the published revelations concerning that awful menagerie—the Court of Berlin—one is struck, not merely with the colossal egomania and brutality of its ruler, but with the degradation of soul of the parasitic crowd who helped to make him what he was. For that poor lost soul, who could not rule himself, yet was allowed to rule over Germany, has been surrounded by a horde of characters equally worthless with himself ; men and women held in the highest honour in the land—and who would have been equally toadied to had they lived in England—but men and women for whom any real sense of right and wrong simply did not exist ; whom no self-respect restrained when their patron commanded, and to

whom no villainy in the royal service came amiss ; a horde whose constant preoccupation it has been to vie with one another in discovering their master's latest whim of vanity, spite or ambition, and to forestall each other in ministering to it ; in scenting the latest member of his entourage who had earned his transient favour, or incurred his displeasure, and setting themselves to make him or break him, as the case might be. Were it not that such a monarch can always find such courtiers, were men *men* enough always to refuse the attractions offered by a life of toadyism and intrigue, and to choose a life of decency and honesty at all costs, there could have been no Kaiser as we have known him. It is as a direct result of these sins, and sins like them, that wars come. But for these things, dear reader, your boys and mine would have been alive to-day. *Because* of these things, they have been murdered. For had Christendom shunned sins which—however little the fact is recognized—are really of the same order as those we have mentioned, the lives of the communities would have been on different lines from those we are familiar with—and then indeed there might have been no war.

Everything but general moral failure is alleged as the cause of our troubles ; every detail of our external lives in turn receives its castigation, down to the eating of meat and the wearing of clothes. Suggestions which their authors evidently consider epoch-making are put forth daily, and perish in a day ; and meanwhile the standing charge continues, as it has continued through the ages, unrebuted, unexamined, and its offer of a remedy unavailed of.

Yet we are living in an age which calls itself practical, which prides itself on its readiness to overhaul and overturn everything that stands in the way of human progress—an age that fondly imagines itself to be revolutionary. In other spheres we do not fear to subject beliefs, traditions, customs, systems, organizations, to a ruthless scrutiny, and if need be to a wholesale scrapping and reconstruction. The whole principle of the minimum of interference by

Governments in the lives of their subjects has gone by the board, and our lives have been ordered by the State, either for our own good, or for the higher good of the community, simply because *it was necessary*. Our long cherished tradition of a voluntary army has vanished, and it is no longer left to us to say whether or no we will play our part in the defence of the common weal, since it is necessary. The fruit of the struggles of three generations of workers for emancipation and justice disappeared in a night, on this same imperious plea of necessity. Educational methods are being changed, or—at least—so many people believe ; and God knows *that* was necessary. Old methods of industry are gone, its organization and machinery scrapped, and new principles adopted to meet the new necessity. All this has been accepted with wonderful docility—all things considered—and we are promised that everything that hinders the rebuilding of society on a stable foundation shall go the same way. Committees and conferences are at work on problems of reconstruction, and men are laying their hands fearlessly on conventions which had become so ingrained in our lives as to seem almost sacred. Has not the necessity now arisen for submitting the sacred belief in the natural upward tendency of man to the same operation ? Why should not its pretensions be subjected to the same scrutiny, and, if found untenable, cast with equal ruthlessness on the scrap heap ?

But—no ; we have settled this question of our own essential virtue to our own perfect satisfaction, and there is no sign of any intention whatever to re-open it. Whatever explanations and solutions of our troubles are put forward, this fatal assumption of man's inherent goodness underlies them all. Most of the proposed schemes for amelioration *require* this goodness in man in order to make them workable ; and are consequently foredoomed to failure. Error is admitted, weakness is admitted, individual perversions are admitted, but mankind, they say, is sound at heart ; all man's sins and failures are but slips on his upward path to perfection. All he wants

is a chance—an opportunity to realize himself—to show what he can become and achieve. This in spite of the patent fact that in the course of the last generation man has had greater opportunities of developing himself—of showing what he can become and achieve—than in any previous period of his history. And the result is told in the stench of decaying bodies from a thousand battle-fields, and in the cry of agony that rises to heaven from a million outraged and devastated homes. Let us stop deceiving ourselves, for no folly brings surer retribution than the folly of self-deception. The failure of to-day is the failure of man at his best, at the maximum of his opportunity; at the zenith of his achievement in the things he had sought after most ardently, and prided himself on most complacently. In a word, man *has* shown what he can do. The war was not an anachronism, but a true symptom of the state of affairs. Germany itself is not an anachronism, but rather the full-grown fruit of modern tendencies. The war was not an obstacle cast by a malignant fate across man's path, barring his way to the felicity he had so nearly attained; it was rather the natural end of the path he was pursuing, the goal to which his steps were inevitably tending, though he pursued his way blindly, and knew not whither he went; the climax of man's activities in the possession of powers and opportunities which to his fathers would have seemed miraculous. It was the issue of the *Apotheosis of Man*.

4

3. VAIN STRUGGLES.

But is not man at least struggling towards the light? Is he not continually striving—however he may fail—to remove the causes of misery, to improve social conditions, and to remedy social injustice? Are not even our political upheavals a proof of this? Are not our various philanthropic schemes, and our ever multiplying societies for the suppression of this, and for the propagation of that, evidence that we are at least making an effort to overcome the evil forces which have mastered us in the past?

Very proper questions, these, and it cannot be denied that some of these efforts prove the existence in certain quarters of a "divine discontent" with things as they are, and a desire to improve them if possible. We are often compelled to such measures in sheer self-defence. But to suggest that such a desire is general, to any serious and impelling extent, is unwarrantable, though the more sanguine of our writers and speakers would persuade us otherwise. And every effort at improvement is met by resentment on the part of large numbers of people, and often by a successful counter-offensive. We have already quoted Sir Henry Maine, supported by Darwin, to the effect that "the greater part of mankind has never shown a particle of desire that its civil institutions should be improved." He had probably not been reading public speeches when he wrote that, but using his eyes and ears. And the same organs of perception reveal to us the fact that the most conspicuous feature of the public mind to-day is its readiness to respond to any stimulus of excitement or passion, and its apathy towards the claims of thought and reason. The people are at the mercy of any clever schemer who wants to "use" them. As Dr. Mühlton remarks in his *Diary*, "Nothing is more terrible than the docile herds of the modern world. Always spiritually blind, they enact evil and good indifferently, and know not what they do. They are borne on the mighty current of some popular excitement, heedless whether it be led by an angel, dominated by a devil, or driven madly along by a fanatic." You can get a thousand to react to a "stunt" cry where you cannot get ten to consider and study, or even to care, what is really wrong, much less to put themselves to any sustained trouble to amend it. Let the reader ask himself how many of his personal acquaintances are possessed with any sincere, impelling desire for the true improvement of our institutions *in the interests of their fellows generally*, as opposed to mere sectional and personal interests. Surely if such a desire existed generally it would be carried out.

The fact that we quarrel vociferously over national and municipal politics is not of itself an indication of our desire for betterment. Quarrelling is no proof of progress. One or both of the parties might conceivably be desiring a *worsening* of our institutions instead of an improvement. Our quarrelling only proves that our schemes are mutually destructive. Energy and wealth are being devoted at the same moment to the furtherance of ideas that are directly opposed the one to the other, showing that we have never discovered the real causes of the evils, and that we are utterly at variance either as to the ideals to be aimed at or the best means of attaining such ideals. Millions of money, and tens of millions of foot-pounds of energy, are annually expended by the great political parties, in each case with the object of destroying the works of the other party; and the greatest wealth and the greatest expenditure are notoriously on the side of the most reactionary of those parties. We dismiss the comforting but absurd delusion that it makes for progress to have parties pulling in opposite directions—it is time serious people stopped repeating such nonsense. We are like a crew of oarsmen, half of whom face the coxwain and half face the bows, striving against each other, each persuaded that he is helping to “get there,” but with the odds all in favour of our going astern with the stream.

And then—let us face the facts. As Mr. Frederick Niven recently pointed out in the *Daily News*, a large proportion of the present “reconstruction” propaganda is pure humbug—place-hunting, notoriety-hunting, tariff-hunting—by people who are too degraded in conscience to realize the wickedness of exploiting the war for such ends. (We are not quoting Mr. Niven’s exact words.) For the rest, as he points out, it is a Babel of half-baked and contradictory suggestions shouted at us by people who have never seriously studied the problems they talk about, and by monomaniacs who believe they see at last, in present conditions, an opportunity for working in their particular “King Charles’s head.”

But there is another aspect to the spectacle of all this

strenuous effort. Taken as an indication of man's ameliorative tendencies it is a mere optical illusion. Even the best of political and social schemes, prolific as they are of promise—though usually bare of achievement so far as regards permanent and radical improvement—are rather an indication of the persistence and many-sidedness of the evil with which we seek to deal. It baffles the ingenuity of our statesmen and the feverish efforts of our philanthropists. And our constant preoccupation with such schemes has an unfortunate effect on our mentality. Our more progressive journals, to cheer us on, paint glowing pictures of the glorious time coming when the particular measures under discussion shall have become law. We get in the habit of forming our judgment of humanity from such hopes and promises, instead of from achieved facts. Many measures of which the highest hopes were entertained have now been on the statute book for years, and yet the world before the war was still seething with heart-burnings and reeking with injustice. And now, while humanity is reeling from the greatest world-failure in history, people and parties are more confident than ever of seeing their life-long aspirations realized—the Liberals, that the days of reaction are numbered, the Tories, that we shall have no more of “this damned nonsense of Liberalism.” Above all, Labour has a programme which is going to usher in a new heaven and a new earth, and meanwhile is so divided within itself that it cannot restrain the violence of its members against each other.

It is the old story, always “jam to-morrow,” and never “jam to-day”; yet so inveterate is our habit of crediting ourselves with our laudable intentions, instead of judging ourselves by actual attained results, that we deceive ourselves into believing that our lips have already tasted the grateful confection. Our never ending efforts to remedy social injustices are due to the fact that we are simply *compelled* to this constant activity, in order to make the conditions of life just endurable; and even so we are not keeping pace with the evils we strive to remedy.

And we are not struggling against Nature, nor against blind inanimate forces. Nature is our *friend*, while we are struggling against *ourselves*; in the words of the music-hall poet, "we have only got ourselves to blame." We hate to write the words, for we love and revere our fellow-man, and have often shuddered to hear the conventional preacher laying down the law as to human depravity, yet this perennial necessity for new legislation, and for new societies to combat new evils, is, honestly considered, a proof of the inveterate tendency of the race to wrongdoing, to corrupting its way on the face of the earth.

This is a unique phenomenon; it has no analogy in nature. The beasts of the forest, in abandoning themselves to their unrestrained instincts, come to magnificent perfection, both as regards the individual and as regards the herd. With man, indulgence in such a course makes him both a horror to himself and a danger to his kind. This indicates to us that man belongs to an entirely different order of beings, and was meant to live by an entirely different law, and suggests that the state of the world to-day is the result of his departure from that law.

All this points to the fact that humanity has been the scene of some terrible tragedy. Man is so superior in his powers, both of mind and soul, to all other living creatures, as to place him for ever entirely beyond the possibility of their competition, and make him practically the native of a different sphere, while his physical development and articulation are so much more highly organized and intricate than theirs as to render his body fully capable of expressing and achieving the conceptions of his wonderful mind. Why is it, unless man has perverted from what he was designed to be, that his natural tendency to corruption is so persistent that, although the fact itself is unconfessed, the whole organization of our life and laws has to be based on a tacit recognition of that fact, and framed with a view to circumscribe its workings? Apart from this, life would become unbearable, as in fact it does when restraint is removed. This is why so many

potentates have been such appalling criminals that the bare recital of their deeds freezes the blood, since they have been practically free from restraint. But the general tendency, even of those who are never likely to sit on a throne, gives the same indication, for it is notorious that no society or community can be kept even reasonably free from corruption except as a result of the most constant and determined vigilance and struggle, and frequent purgings and reformations. And a purging is needed to-day which shall be, as compared with previous cleansings, as a housewife's spring-cleaning from garret to basement compared with a dirty slut's dab with a duster.

Our argument is not meant to imply a wholesale condemnation of the human race. We gladly pay our tribute to the good that exists, and are only dealing here with general tendencies; but those tendencies are so powerful as practically to control the situation.

This is not written with any idea that the acceptance of the doctrine of "original sin," or any other neatly labelled doctrine, will save us. The mere acceptance or holding of doctrines seems to have no effect whatever on human conduct. If every man and woman in Christendom were to "accept" the whole Thirty-nine Articles and to start regular attendance at divine worship to-morrow, that would not of itself make two-pennyworth of difference. Some of the worst of people do that, and it has done them no good. Yet, though we say this, we *do* mean that man is astray from God, and that this is the fatal reason why, despite all his marvellous possibilities, man is—what we see him to-day, and has got the world into the state we see it in to-day. We want to recommend, as a matter of hard, practical politics, that our readers should calmly and dispassionately examine the biblical explanation of our troubles. With all reverence we maintain that there is no book so absolutely sane, or so full of common sense, as the Bible. There is no other view or theory that so squares with and explains the facts as the biblical view. There is no one, and there never has been any one, so well worth listening to as Christ ;

no remedy so well worth considering as the remedy He presents. There may be biblical difficulties, but in so vast a library, containing so much that we can recognize, even in our semi-blindness, as being of surpassing truth and power ; in this library written for all ages and societies, and to "all sorts and conditions of men," the marvel is that there is so much that we *can* understand—more than enough for our needs. For the message of Christ is such that its sincere acceptance and adoption in practice will heal us of our plagues.

This is not a proposition which admits of any sort of denial or doubt. It is beyond any question impossible to deny the fact that the adoption by Christendom of Christian principles, in place of the anti-Christian principles which at present rule her, can—and can alone—save and heal her. Christendom must be converted to Christianity, or perish. And the difficulties of the Bible have been grossly exaggerated, the German-led criticisms of it have often been as dishonest as the German account of the origin of the war, and our own men who have coquetted with them have simply been "truckling to the enemy." And, moreover, most people have not taken the trouble to examine the subject, and consequently have never come up against its "difficulties."

4. MODERN DARKNESS, AND THE LIGHT.

The Bible certainly contains no difficulties comparable with those inherent in theories which meet with a very favourable reception to-day, and in some cases with general acceptance. Let our readers try to imagine, for instance, what an outcry there would be against the Bible if there were found therein a suggestion to the effect that we had worn away our tails by sitting on them. Yet Darwin argues at considerable length that this is a probable explanation of the manner in which we, or our ancestors, lost our caudal appendages. And "we are all Darwinians now"! Or take his theory of the origin of the human eye, and of the eyes of the animal creation

generally. Away back in the dim past, when as yet there was no eye to see the sun that daily shed his beams on an unappreciative world, some one among the lowly forms of life then inhabiting this planet "happened" to have some spot on its surface slightly sensitive to light. (There must evidently have been *two* such spots, and it is fortunate they did not "happen" to be at the back of the head.) Bear in mind that no plan or scheme or intention is admitted by the theory. Such peculiarity, it is assumed, would give the organism some slight advantage over its fellows in the struggle for existence, and it would have a better chance than others both of attaining vigorous development and of propagating its kind, and the peculiarity would be more strongly marked in its offspring. Now open an encyclopædia or work on physiology at the section dealing with the human eye, illustrated with diagrams, and carefully read the descriptive explanations. We are asked to believe that, as a result of such fortuitous variation in the original organism, and of similar variations having "happened" to occur in subsequent generations—no goal meanwhile being intelligently aimed at, and the needs of the organism having little or no power or tendency to produce or improve the organ required—the marvellous structure of the eye has been evolved, with all its separate parts and powers of movement and adaptation, with its intricate mechanism and nerve communication with the brain, and its power to tell that brain what objects are placed a yard or a billion miles in front of it. How much more sane to believe that light was made for eyes, and eyes made for light, both in pursuance of one great plan. Turn to the section on the ear, the heart or the generative system, for Darwin's theory is that *all* organs have been produced in the same way. The generative system is a remarkable case in point, as it would certainly be difficult for the creature to transmit its peculiarity to its offspring until it had attained some means of reproducing itself, whether by fission or by internal gestation or otherwise. If the reader accepts Darwinism and rejects the Bible we would

invite him, after a careful study of the articles and diagrams referred to, and of the Bible, to settle honestly with himself the question *why* he accepts the one and rejects the other.

Again, what should we say if the Bible told of departed sons from "the other side" revisiting the homes of their childhood, dragging the furniture round the room, making it climb up the walls and on to the other furniture, and finally smashing it? Yet such stories are gravely told us by a much respected man of science whose name is a household word,¹ and as gravely reviewed by the newspapers and magazines, and supported by well-known literary men. We write with all sympathy and reverence. The learned professor clearly loved—and loves—his son, as truly as others who have suffered the same unspeakable loss. But we presume he sends forth his book to be commented upon, and we comment on it as restrainedly as we can. The present writer would be grieved and shocked beyond measure if his own dear sons, after behaving themselves decently while they were with us, were to come back and play such distressing antics. And what sort of state of mind can the public be in who can read with patience the explanation given, in the same book, by another "spirit" that the bricks, houses and other articles used on "the other side"—described as wonderfully solid and real—are made out of the *smell* of the same things down here, which is continually rising up to that sphere, and there materialized and manufactured into the articles required for use on the spirit plane?

Even Raymond himself—poor lad—is represented as entertaining his family with stories of how they make things "up there," including even whisky-sodas and, in one case, cigars. It is not stated whether the latter were made out of the parts of the earthly cigars which had been smoked, or out of the discarded "toppers," but in any case they do not appear to have been a great success, for, after trying four, the smoker gave it up.

What would be said of Christians if 98 per cent.

¹ *Raymond, or Life and Death.* Sir Oliver Lodge.

of the statements made in the Bible were manifestly fraudulent, and they still went on believing because the remaining two per cent. had not yet been disproved? Or if *all* the men through whom its messages have come, from Moses to St. John, were proved deceivers? Yet we have the testimony of Mr. Hereward Carrington,¹ himself a propagandist of spiritualism, and a member of one of the most important committees of the Society for Psychical Research, to the effect that 98 per cent. of mediumistic manifestations are fraudulent (during eighteen months' investigations he found *every* case fraudulent), and that *all* mediums cheat on every possible occasion. And this testimony is corroborated on every hand. This writer, again supported by the generality of witnesses, admits the unprintable foulness of many of the "communications," and their terrible mental and moral effect. Hundreds of people are sent insane yearly, he believes, and many driven to suicide, through practising with the "planchette" alone. In spite of all this, people are increasingly "seeking unto wizards, and to those who peep and mutter, and not unto their God; on behalf of the living unto the dead." If they believe it is really their departed friends and children who are thus "called up," one would think the survivors would shrink from encouraging their spirits to consort with such company, lest they suffer the same defiling and demoralizing effects as are produced on the living. We are not competent to decide whether in all cases it is exclusively trickery, or whether supernatural (or infra-natural) beings do sometimes assist at these orgies, but we are satisfied that no good spirits, and no wise spirits, take part in them. The narrators, in spite of their constant claim to be "scientific" in their methods, seem sadly lacking in a sense of logic or of the value of evidence; some of Mr. Carrington's own arguments are about as convincing as the proposition that "two and two make Charley's Aunt." The "communications," when they are not false and mischievous, or merely trivial, are simply the shameless and persistent

¹ *The Problems of Psychical Research*, by Hereward Carrington.

touting of the mediums for more business. For the most part, however, they are merely banal and trivial—a medley composed of copy-book platitudes, fag-ends of sermons, and echoes from “Auntie’s” column in *Nursery Notes*. Or they are wordy, windy platitudes about our “all seeking to do all the good we can”—with no enlightenment as to what that consists in. We challenge these dupes to produce between them one helpful and original revelation for humanity that they have received from the “other side.” No light is thrown from that higher sphere on the true causes of human miseries; no hand is stretched forth to lift the veil from our blinded eyes, or to help us out of our perplexities.

Even the writers who seek to commend spiritualism to us admit that most of the “communications” are manifest balderdash; but what is their explanation? They suggest that the spirits, on the particular plane which is able to communicate with this world (for there are several “planes”) have not reached perfection, that their knowledge is still limited, and that they are sometimes compelled to resort to “gagging.” Why on earth cannot the writers perceive the obviously real explanation, which would occur to any plain man, that it is the *medium* who is gagging—when she is hard up for an idea—and that there is no evidence for the assumption that any spirit is present at all.

Darkness has indeed covered the land, and gross darkness the people; yet when we look for light we behold only grosser darkness. For these “revelations” are not rays of light, however feeble, shining through the gloom. They are not even intelligent gropings in the darkness. They are rather added darkness; darkness rolled upon darkness; thick clouds of increasing blackness and obscurity, creating a darkness as of Egypt, though a plague of our own making; enshrouding the minds and souls of the people, enveloping them in a dense and impenetrable fog, from which escape for those who are once involved seems well-nigh hopeless.

And hopeless indeed is the case so long as people will listen to these charlatans, and will not listen to Christ.

The class of writers, whether spiritualistic or "philosophical," who meet with the readiest acceptance to-day, although they usually patronize Christ, are fond of referring with lofty superiority to His message as an "Oriental religion," or to belief in that message as a "mediæval faith." These men really believe they know more than Christ! Oh, the madness of human conceit! Who ever found Christ wrong? Where else can we turn and find such essential truth—such insight and judgment? Perhaps we ought to use loftier words when speaking of Him, but these suit our purpose best for the moment. Dealing as He does with matters of the heart and conscience, He speaks directly, and—we are disposed to think—particularly, to this age. He is speaking, in fact, to *us*. As I read His words I am impressed with the fact that He knows the people *I* know; He knows our modern society through and through; He knows our politics, He knows our "religion," and He knows our press. And He knows *me*, as I am often constrained painfully to confess. In the sphere of the matters with which He deals, local and temporal conditions have no place. His message is not "Oriental," though it was first spoken under Eastern skies; it is universal. He speaks to the human heart, which remains the same—east, west, north and south—from the days in which He spoke on earth to the end of the age. And never man spake like this man. Under His eye, all distinctions of wealth, learning or social position fall away like the rags they are. At His first word, He gets right down to the man underneath all his self-assumed distinctions, and deals with *him*; what he *is*, what he *does*, and what are his motives. Not what is his position, his politics, his philosophy or even his "religion."

In the flaming light of that presence—the light that lighteth every man—how we stand condemned to-day! Viewed in the light of His life and His words, what a picture our modern life presents as lived by a people who profess to know His message, and even to be superior to it!

5. THE LOVE OF DARKNESS.

We shall endeavour in Chapter III to show that much of our fancied good is evil; meanwhile, where do we stand concerning moral questions that we *ought to* know the rights of? Take the one question of sexual purity and conjugal fidelity. Are we sure we have any right to be so very shocked at the accounts of the life of some of the ancient cities? We have seen recent statistics so appalling that we fear to quote them without careful verification from official sources. But this is unnecessary for our purpose, since every one knows that the facts *are* appalling, and are becoming increasingly so. But this could not be if public opinion—that is to say, the *general* public morality—were not at a very low ebb. Were it a case of a municipal “nuisance”—a contaminated water supply or defective drainage—the people would be up in arms and see what could be done. But the public conscience acquiesces in a moral plague which is spreading more ruinous contagion than any mere physical dirt could ever have to answer for. That this is the fault of the community generally, and not merely of the actual offenders or victims, is proved by the popular attitude towards the vice of prostitution.

Do not be afraid to let your daughters read this, gentle readers. Many of them are reading far worse things, though they are usually sugar-coated.

Get into conversation with the ordinary man you meet in train, restaurant or business, and as often as not he will maintain that prostitution is a “necessity.” He has neither desire nor hope ever to see a different state of things. He is willing to acquiesce in a system which requires that thousands of young girls shall be bred up yearly to a life—or betrayed to it—that is as hell upon earth, though he, forsooth, is a staunch upholder of our marriage laws. The moral obtuseness of such a state of mind is one of its most alarming features, and affords a conspicuous example of the paralysing effect of a vicious outlook on the intelligence. A system which adopted

“free love” as a principle might be an intelligible proposition, though a repulsive one; but here we have the amazing spectacle of men desiring to maintain the existing marriage system, expecting to keep their wives to themselves, ready to avenge themselves on any man who should betray their daughters, yet conniving at the yearly ruin of thousands of our sisters, and at their being doomed to shame, disease and early death. In vain one argues with such a man. If prostitution is a necessity, you urge, then the prostitute is a useful member of society, and consequently worthy of all honour. Does he honour her? Will he receive her in his home? Will he introduce her to his wife and daughter?

At the mention of wife and daughter his anger is aroused. You have no right to mention them and the poor unfortunate in the same breath. But you are more anxious about the truth than about placating him. You know the strength of your case, and you brave his wrath. If it is a necessity, you urge, and a useful and therefore honourable profession, will he consent to his daughter's entering the profession? The dispute is not usually allowed to proceed beyond this point—the writer has tried it, and he knows. If you get safely away, you have some strange reflections. Here is a man, who possibly occupies a pew in the parish church on Sundays, concerned to nominally uphold the recognized Christian law of society with regard to the sexes, but doing so with his tongue in his cheek all the time. He, and thousands like him, are equally concerned to maintain, as an auxiliary to their system, a loathsome underworld, an underworld of horror and misery, into which numbers of our sisters must fall daily to be engulfed for ever. And into this underworld our young men are to be encouraged to make periodical descents, to emerge soiled, degraded in conscience and defiled in body, their manhood sapped before they reach manhood's years, consciously disqualified from consecrating their lives to any good and holy cause.

A great many people, in Parliament and without, will shrug their shoulders and dismiss our views as “old-

fashioned." So be it; but by adopting this attitude you admit our case. That case is, that Christendom is steadily getting wickeder, crueller and more hardened. The hardening arises from an ever increasing familiarity with the painful conditions. Numbers of young girls in the offices of the Army Pay Corps are dealing to-day with pay-sheets of hospital cases marked with the red "V," and it is all taken as in the day's work. It is a fact about the "Red Lamp." It was a fact about the queues. The marvel is that so great a proportion of our gallant lads have maintained the purity of their manhood unsullied.

Prostitution is defended and protected, adultery condoned and promiscuity made a joke of. And many who defend these things, and are thus really responsible for their ghastly results in the ruin of thousands of their fellow countrymen and women, consider themselves fit to guide the nation in the gigantic task of reconstruction.

Failing other argument, people will put the triumphant poser, "How are you going to stop it?" We reply, That is not a question, although for grammatical purposes it is followed by an interrogation mark. It is merely a defiance—an expression of opposition to any attempt to stop it. Yet we will give you our answer, so far at least as our first step towards stopping it is concerned. Our first step, then, towards stopping it is to convict *you* of your sin, to endeavour to convert *you*; to touch your conscience, and make you realize the cruelty and wickedness to which you are party. It is you who are the obstacle; it will not stop till you want it to stop, and for some time after. Opposite the window where I write is a school. I see the tiny tots toddling up to the infants' door as the bell rings. Merry young girls, with their fresh faces and laughing eyes, run up to meet the teacher of the girls' school. Here comes one in her teens tripping by, no longer a scholar, but greeting her old friends as she hurries, with conscious importance, to her "situation" at the big draper's in the town. And any one of these, or all of them, for any hand you will stretch out to save them—is to be allowed to fall into the pit, and to be

smothered in its slime ; to become a horror to herself—to curse the day she was born—to hide her face in a hospital as she wastes away with loathsome disease, or to disappear, no one knows whither, till her sodden body is taken in the cold grey morning from out of the black, shuddering river.

In an infirmary within a short walk of here lies a child—already a mother. She has lain there like a dead thing for many weeks, ever since her baby was born—sinking—sinking, soon to sink out of sight for ever. She has never rallied from the terrible shock and strain of the confinement, with all its attendant circumstances, on that immature body and mind. To-day she nearly died in her mother's arms, as the latter attempted to raise her. Long ere this appears in print her soul will have fled into the presence of Him who is of so much greater mercy than man. But why mention her ? There are thousands like her. How many of us consider what tragedies are daily hidden by the walls of our various institutions ? The victims form a constant procession through the wards of infirmary, prison and madhouse. A bed receives them, they die, and are buried, and the bed is prepared for another. And the fathers of their children walk scathless, *often boasting of their exploits*, in a society which visits the penalties of sin on the weaker sex. For weaker it is, and *always will be*, in spite of the sex's foolish boasting, and its *only* hope is in the moralization of society. Have we not to answer for this ? Is there not a God who taketh vengeance ? Or do we pacify our consciences with the reflection that—"human nature being what it is," as Mr. Macpherson would say—such things always have been, and always must be ?

Many a man adopts the attitude we have described towards such questions because he is bound by his own past. To own that prostitution is not a "necessity" would be to "make himself a transgressor." But, even so, such obduracy is the gravest of errors. The past may be forgiven if we are sincerely of a different mind now. It is the mission of God's Spirit to convince of sin

and to lead to repentance and amendment ; but if He is touching our conscience, and we resist Him for the sake of justifying our own past, heedless of the ruin this involves for others, then ours is a continuing sin—the sin that hath never forgiveness ; it is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

6. FALSE LIGHTS.

We had intended to touch on some others of the more glaring evils that are pursuing their course almost unchecked to-day. We might show how, not only has all the dread solemnity of the war brought no improvement, but the war itself has in many cases been made the occasion for a more unbridled abandonment to the things that lead to war and every kind of calamity ; abandonment to covetousness, to fraud and especially to hypocrisy. (The word “ humbug ” better describes what we mean—never was humbug more flourishing than to-day). And the war has produced many new evils of its own. All these have to be confessed and dealt with before we can have peace—we mean *real* peace—the peace of God. The longer we postpone dealing with them—the longer we persist in our false diagnoses of the malady, and fool round with quack remedies—the harder it will be to get right when we do finally attempt to take ourselves in hand.

But we find that many devoted men and women are already doing their best to arouse the conscience of the nation with regard to specific evils that are recognized as such, and we will leave the task in their hands. Our own task is rather to make an attempt to unveil the real nature of much that is often regarded with considerable complacency by society at large. This subject, which we enter on in Chapter III, is one, in the circumstances, of some difficulty. Not that the subject of morality is of itself of great subtlety or complexity. *It is essentially a simple and easy subject.* The difficulty is rather that the commonly accepted ideas and outlook of society are already of the extremest subtlety, and the trouble is to

reduce them to simplicity. Mankind is enmeshed in a tangle of conventional errors and traditions, and false habits of thought—a general confusion and misappraisement of values. It almost makes the heart sink to attempt ever so little towards helping to clear away these accretions, and to get down to the simple truth of things—the first principles of right and wrong—and to indicate how these principles work out in practice.

When we contemplate the false ideas of other times or other countries, we are disposed to be contemptuous of a society which could adopt and guide itself by standards which *we* admit are wrong. People are shocked, for instance, at the reflection that a nation of our own race should within modern times have looked upon slaveholding as a laudable institution, and taught in church and Sunday school that for a “nigger” to attempt to escape from bondage, even if it were to find the wife who had been torn from his arms and sold, was a heinous offence, and that for a white man to help him,—i.e. for a Christian to show compassion—was infinitely worse. Yet people did hold such a belief, as they can, and do, hold any belief which they find to square with their convenience and their desires. Among the many good things that Mark Twain has given us—and we can often learn more from such writers than from many sermons—is his account of the struggle that took place in the breast of Huckleberry Finn, the struggle between the poor lad’s falsely conventional conscience and the untaught light of nature—often a safer guide than the sanctions of a time-serving religion—in his own really honest heart.

The kindness of that heart had led him to assist Jim the nigger to escape from his “owners” down the Mississippi River. After many adventures on the raft, shared with Jim, the uneasy feeling that he was stealing Jim from his master became too much for poor Huck. In vain he tried to excuse himself, arguing that he had been brought up wrong, and was not so much to blame. But it was no use. “Something inside of him” kept saying, “There was the Sunday school, you could a gone to it; and if you’d

a done it they'd a learnt you there that people that acts as I'd been acting about that nigger goes to everlasting fire." It was the fear of everlasting fire, and not his better instincts, that prompted him at last to get a piece of paper and write to the owner :

Miss Watson your runaway nigger Jim is down here two mile below Pikeville and Mr. Phelps has got him and he will give him up for the reward if you send.

HUCK FINN.

And when he had written this, he says : " I felt good and all washed clean of sin for the first time I had ever felt so in my life, and I knowed I could pray now. But I didn't do it straight off, but laid the paper down and set there thinking—thinking how good it was all this happened so. And went on thinking. And got to thinking over our trip down the river ; and I see Jim before me, all the time, in the day and in the night-time, sometimes moonlight, sometimes storms, and we a floating along, talking, and singing, and laughing. But somehow I couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against him, but only the other kind. I'd see him standing my watch on top of his'n, stead of calling me, so I could go on sleeping ; and see him how glad he was when I come back out of the fog ; and when I come to him again in the swamp, up there where the feud was ; and such-like times ; and would always call me honey, and pet me, and do everything he could think of for me, and how good he always was ; and at last I struck the time I saved him by telling the men we had small-pox aboard, and he was so grateful, and said I was the best friend old Jim ever had in the world, and the *only* one he's got now. And then I happened to look around, and see that paper.

" It was a close place. I took it up, and held it in my hand. I was a trembling, because I'd got to decide, for ever, betwixt two things, and I knowed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself :

" ' All right, then, I'll go to hell '—and tore it up."

It is idle to say this is only a story. It is *true*—true in substance and in fact—although the actual incident was the product of the author's imagination. According to the story, this brave little lad risked his immortal soul to obey the best instincts of his heart, when "ministers of the gospel" would not even risk their jobs for the sake of saving their black brethren—and sisters—from unnameable outrage. And if we reject the story, and recognize only the author, we still have the fact that a secular writer, usually regarded as a mere humorist, was able to expose in this scathing way the religious leaders of his day, who defended a state of things which involved some of the cruellest and most cowardly of sins that ever disgraced humanity.

When Christianity first made its appearance, in all its purity, it was felt to cut right across the morality and religion of the people among whom it was preached. *Then* people had to make their choice—Christ, and His holiness, righteousness and love, or the principles that ruled the world around them, a world dominated by all that was opposed to Christ. As Christianity became more popular, however, it became convenient for many to profess it who were of no mind to give up the practices that suited them, and in our own age a sort of pseudo-Christianity has been evolved—developed and perfected within the Churches themselves—in which the real definite and intelligent application of the principles of Christianity to the various relationships of life has been largely relegated to the background. False standards have been erected, whereby it is possible to ignore the divine injunctions as they bear on our attitude and actions towards society, and still to pass for "religious."

Now, although many will not credit the fact at first, it *is* a fact—which we do not stop to argue here—that the only absolutely reliable basis we have for morality, that is, for consideration for our fellows, is the Divine Imperative. Apart therefrom it is difficult to establish any authoritative obligation on man to be just, true or merciful to his neighbour. The consciences of con-

scientious men in Christendom, even when such men do not acknowledge Christ, are the fruit of His teaching. The whole world of Christendom, therefore—and not merely the Churches, or “religious” people—is dependent on the maintenance of a Christianity which shall bear some real resemblance to the Christianity of Christ. So long as there exists a true standard the world has something whereby to measure and appraise its own standards—a basis on which to found a decent workaday morality. But if that standard is falsified the world will get short measure. If the light of the world is darkened the world itself is darkened. And this is what has happened, as evidenced by the confusion and ignorance that are so apparent to-day on questions of morality in the wider sense. If the world saw a higher standard than its own among professing Christians it would stand reproved, but it does *not* see a standard which differs to any conspicuous extent from that by which it measures its own conduct.

All this brings us to the disconcerting reflection that, in these days of “progress,” there is practically no such science as the science of morality. The one thing that underlies and determines the whole question of our fate is practically not studied at all. The so-called “moral science” of the philosophers, even including “ethics,” largely begs the question. And even were it otherwise, how often do we meet a man who has studied this “moral science,” who remembers what he has read, and ever thinks of applying it to the actions of his daily life—to the way he shall use his vote, to his attitude towards the next labour dispute, or to the price and conditions of his next war contract, and his manner of carrying it out? Among the masses there is not even a well-recognized word to express what we mean by morality. The word is employed here, for want of a better term, to cover everything included in the whole range of problems of what is right and what is wrong, and those familiar with ethical questions will have so understood it. But there are millions of our countrymen who, in spite of our Council

schools, only recognize the word as applying to *sexual* morality, and who have no common word to express the "rightness" or otherwise of actions generally. This is true even of many who, from their opportunities of education, might be expected to know better. The writer was once challenged as to his reason for objecting to a course of action proposed by an acquaintance, and was compelled to use the expression that "such a course would be immoral," with the result that the party in question immediately fired up as if he had been charged with coveting his neighbour's wife. The only other word available to express the subject of right and wrong—since we shun such a magnificent word as "righteousness" in every-day conversation—is "ethics," or "ethical." But this word is simply not understood by more than half the population, millions of people, though they have received sufficient schooling to enable them to read the newspaper after a style, simply not knowing whether it is English, Greek or Esperanto.

And yet, even if we omit for the moment all questions of our duty towards God, and think only of our relations with each other, all who reflect must admit that morality, in its larger and true sense, lies at the root of our personal and social welfare. So long as a plurality of human beings exists, the question must arise of their relations to each other—of the "rightness" or morality of certain actions; and the life of the community will depend on how this obligation is interpreted and acted upon. May we massacre our fellows? May we starve them? May we exploit them, or herd them in slums? May we cheat them, lie to them, fawn on or flatter them? And if not, why not? on what compulsion must we not? The feeling that these are real questions, to which there is some real answer not dependent on customs or conventions, implies a consciousness that there exists somewhere a real tangible obligation, an Absolute Imperative. A hazy recognition of this is seen in the fact that every nation enacts laws to regulate the mutual relations of its subjects. Such laws, however, have too often been

largely moulded to suit the interests of the individuals who have been able to exert the greatest influence on their making, so that it is vain to seek in any nation's legislation a codified expression of the science of morality.

Professor H. L. Stewart observes, in his *Nietzsche and the Ideals of Modern Germany*, that "every history of moral ideas has been abortive." Why is this? The reason probably is that modern treatises professing to deal with the subject consist largely of mythical history. They are dissertations on the supposed history of the emergence and growth of the moral sense in man in the course of his evolution. These should rightly be regarded as works of imagination; for though dignified by the name of "researches," they are rather elaborations of the ideas of the writers, starting with the unsubstantiated assumption that man has evolved from the lower animals. It is interesting to follow such writers as they trace the gradual evolution of the "herd instinct" from the primary instinct of self-preservation, and the further evolution of this "herd instinct" into our present instinct of morality; but it is disconcerting to find that, of all the millions of forms of life through which we are supposed to have passed on our way from the primeval amoeba to our present high stage of development, no single fossil or relic is left in the direct succession to which the writers can point; that it is not a question of a "missing link," but of a chain consisting of millions of links, of which no single link can be found, so that the writers are left, like other masters of fiction, to people the stage with creatures of their own imagination.

The reader may suspect that this question of evolution is the "King Charles's head" of the present writer, fated to crop up as frequently in the present work as did the head of that unfortunate monarch in the "memorial" of the puzzled Mr. Dick. There is no need for alarm, however, for we shall not offend again; but before leaving the subject we make the counter-charge that evolution is rather the "King Charles's head" of most writers on social, moral and philosophical questions. It

is worked to death to explain and excuse every unhappy instinct in man, and to flatter him into the belief that he is automatically improving. It is relied on, both in its historical and its eschatological aspects, as the basis of nearly every philosophical, social or even political or religious theory or scheme—and relied on to such a degree that, if it cannot be proven, such theories or schemes must fall to the ground. As Mr. Chalmers Mitchell remarks, in his work already quoted from, writers on the more pretentious subjects simply “exude” what they assume to be Darwinism. It would be a relief to get free from this tyranny. It would be a relief if, in future, our instructors would endeavour to work out their theses on their own merits, from actually existing and observable phenomena, without recourse to any supposed “law of human progress,” and without referring to society as an “organism,” employing a mere analogy as if it were a scientific fact. Every time they find the theory of evolution creeping in, we would respectfully suggest that they should do what Mr. Dick did—make a kite of it, and try again.

(“*That man mad?*”)

The disquieting feature about such works of “research” as we have mentioned, is that their natural tendency is to discredit, or to deny any solid basis for, even such sense of morality as we possess. Intentionally or unintentionally, they form part of the general assault which is being made to-day on the foundations of righteousness and decency, which is attaining such alarming proportions, and in which the way has been led—as usual—by the nation whose principles we set out to defeat by ordeal of battle.

7. “LEARN, OR PERISH.”

One would have expected, in this eminently “practical” age, that the ordinary man or woman who had been to school would have received some instruction in the *elements* of morality. Had we taken a tithe of the

pains in this matter that we take in matters relating to "getting on," or that minister to our love of money and "pleasure," or to our incorrigible desire for flattery, the people as a whole would have received some systematic elemental teaching on the question of what is right and what is wrong, and why. It ought not to be difficult to construct a scheme for some such systematic instruction. For a bed-rock foundation we should have—as in the case of some of the exact sciences—to start with an axiom. The general sense of the community would probably agree on an axiom setting out the simplest Christian principle, as, for example, "that we ought to desire the good of our neighbour." Proceeding from this axiomatic truth, simple propositions might be built up, examined and explained, and applied progressively to the commonest problems of the life, first of a child, and then of an adult. Examined in the light of such foundation principles, it would soon be seen that a great part of our laws and institutions, and a great many of the motives from which we ordinarily act in the important relationships of life, which are assumed to be legitimate, and even laudable, are in the highest degree pernicious and productive of deplorable results. At present, for instance, when the suffrages of the electorate are being sought, or when the voters themselves are discussing how they shall use their vote, few realize their responsibility for the ultimate issues of the principles and policy which they espouse, though the fate and conditions of life of millions may be involved. Quite apart from the awful criminality of the lies told on these occasions, the vote is largely appealed for, and largely given, on the ground of the amount of alleged benefit to be obtained by the individual voter, or the class he belongs to. The day after casting his vote from such motives the elector perhaps attends divine service. No matter who is conducting the service, the worshipper is almost bound to hear, in the reading of the lesson, or in the most ordinary comments thereon, something which reveals his action of the previous day in its true light, and which

warns him of the fate awaiting the man who is guilty of such sin, and who dies unrepentant.

The real bearing of what he has done comes home to him like a flash. "If that is true," he says, "I shall go to hell." Overwhelmed with horror, trembling in every limb, he seeks the minister after the service, and tells him all the truth. Gently the minister shows him that, though the thing done is past undoing, yet all is not lost, he may be forgiven; and he goes away, chastened indeed by the thought of his offence, but renewed in mind and resolve, determined by God's grace in future to use his sacred trust only for sacred ends.

Pardon us, dear reader. We had allowed ourselves to write as we should have been justified in writing were we living in a logical world. Nothing of the kind happens. It never occurs to him to apply to one of the most responsible acts of his life the simple principles he hears enunciated in church. And the average minister would be shocked if any chance remark of his were to cause perturbation to one of his most respected parishioners, and would be exceedingly puzzled to know how to deal with him.

We see on every hand the almost universal worship of "success," without a thought of the moral issues involved. Books dedicated to this worship are issued, and presumably read, by the hundred thousand. The unholy ideal is set before the reader of acquiring a forceful personality, of impressing his will upon others, of "using" his fellows, all with a view to "getting on," i.e. making money. A great deal of the current teaching of the nature of "advice to young men"—teaching that is held in the highest esteem—and which is praised by the reviewers of the secular and religious press in which it is advertised, would be voted moral poison by a community which had been instructed in the elements of good and evil. Such teaching seeks to perpetuate, and even to glorify, our present social system, with its glaring meannesses and cruelties. "It is quite a good world," the reader is told; "it will be your own fault if you do

not get on." It is pointed out what prizes such a state of things offers to the astute, and the reader is shown, in return for his half-crown, how *he* may obtain one of these prizes for himself—and let the devil take the others. Tribute is usually paid to temperance, honesty and industry (thus securing the support of the virtuous), but chiefly as a means of gaining these ends, and not for the sake of serving our fellows more efficiently. Interviews with famous millionaires are set forth, in which the latter tell how many years they worked in the office from seven o'clock in the morning to some unearthly hour at night (miserable beings!), and the millionaire is held up as an example to copy, regardless of what he may *be*. These are only a few instances of the topsyturvy state of our moral ideas, but were the subject systematically taught and studied, and were people taught to consider the ultimate effect on the community of the pursuit of perverted ideals by the individual, it would be seen that more than half our "good" is evil, and its pursuit fraught with inevitable disaster for the race.

The point we raise is, therefore, not an academic one. We are not seeking to secure acceptance for the doctrine, often laid down so painstakingly by the preachers, that "our best is mixed with bad." The object of such preaching is usually to induce the individual to feel his need of divine pardon—or of the offices of the minister—and even that object is seldom achieved. For so few preachers ever particularize, that the teaching carries no conviction, and is only accepted as a sort of "doctrine," which has little effect on the practical life from Monday to Saturday. But the matter we raise is purely practical, and is raised for practical purposes. For our perverted ideals are being made whips to scourge us, and we suggest that only by very seriously "considering our ways," and acting according as we find, can we hope for any amelioration of the world's troubles.

When the writer has attempted to put forth in conversation his plea for some such system of ethical study

and teaching—a study of the nature *and results* of motives and actions—he has been met with only two objections. The first is that, though we might agree on our axioms, we should soon come to disagreement over the application of them. On the same lines it might be argued, Free Traders and Protectionists disagree over the application of the figures shown by our trade returns, but we never heard this put forward as a reason for dispensing entirely with the science of figures. It is incomparably more important that the people should be grounded in the elements of right and wrong than in the elements of commerce, yet the former subject is practically dispensed with, while the latter is considered indispensable for every schoolboy. Let our children be taught the “five R’s,” instead of only the “three R’s,” and it will do no harm if the two we have suggested, Right and Wrong, come first.

Although no such teaching exists to-day, the people are called upon to take decisions which would be difficult enough even if they had received proper instruction to fit them for the task. At present it is like asking people to decide on abstruse mathematical problems who have never been taught the four rules of arithmetic. They are called upon to decide by their votes the determining of policies calling for the most careful and conscientious application of principles which simply do not exist in their brains. Small wonder that arguments concerning such matters, whether among the “educated” or the uneducated, are usually such an appalling and inconclusive jumble of incoherence; for there is no common basis between the disputants, and each man seems to the other as a barbarian.

With apologies to our gallant Allies—for the expression came from America—we would instance the not infrequently quoted phrase, “My country, right or wrong.” If, by this, a man simply means that he intends to adopt that attitude, without caring whether it is a right attitude or not, we have no more to say; we cannot stop to argue with every rascal we meet. But we find the man is

often *not* a rascal, or at least he does not mean to be one. On the contrary, when he uses such a phrase, he believes he is giving expression to a noble and chivalrous sentiment. He does not say it sullenly, as a man to whom the question of right and wrong is one of no moment; he says it with flashing eye and swelling breast. He is convinced that it is a *right* sentiment, utterly failing to see what a hash he is making, in the same breath, of both logic and morality; for he is making himself responsible for the proposition that it is *right* to do *wrong*. On this principle, of course, the Germans are justified in all that they have done.

The second objection we have met with is, that we could not always *afford* to act in accordance with such fixed principles, and that in such cases we *ought not* to act on them. This objection need not detain us, for it brings us again to the same impossible conclusion, that it is sometimes right to do wrong, which means an end to all sanity.

As an instance of the chaotic state of mind even of some of our legislators on this subject, a question was asked in the Commons during the war with reference to our air policy. Would the minister give an assurance, it was asked, that the Government would not be deterred by any considerations, *ethical or otherwise*, from taking a certain course? The minister fell into the trap, and gave the required assurance. And no voice was raised in protest against this formal undertaking that, in this "war for the right," we would ignore all considerations of right and wrong. And the religious community was as little perturbed, for the member who asked the question continues to address devotional meetings, and recently presided at a Service of Public Intercession.

When we make up our minds to devote our best energies to the study, and the systematic teaching, of the one great question that transcends all others, seeing that it underlies all our actions and determines our fate as a race; when we examine it with the same simplicity and devotion to truth as we apply to the study of physics

or chemistry ; there can be little doubt that we shall come to the conclusion, already suggested, that the cause of the miseries of Christendom is to be found in moral obliquity, though too often—alas!—such obliquity passes, by the existing standards, for rectitude. A dreary enough conclusion, if that were all ; but the discovery of the cause may lead us to seek a remedy.

And they who seek diligently will find.

III

THE LIGHT THAT IS DARKNESS

I. THE SOLIDARITY OF EVIL.

WHEN I bade my youngest son farewell at the door of the Whitehall recruiting office, I had some strange thoughts. He left me cheerfully, even blithely, to answer the call, though I doubt not he was thinking—as I was—of his brothers who so went before him—in their case never to return. But he had committed himself into God's hands with a faith which—even more than his youth—accounted for the firm lip with which he said the first real “good-bye” of his short life.

I thought of those words of Christ, in His last injunction to Peter, and through him to Christendom, “Shepherd My lambs.” God! How we have shepherded them—making of them a hedge between us and the wolves!

We venture to submit a scheme for a League of Nations which really *might* do something towards obviating wars. Let every nation which is a member of the League be bound to employ only its older men in any fighting that is to be done. Let the League strike, with all the might of its resources, at the first nation which puts a man under forty-five into the field. Campaigning would come hard on the old men, but it would be the same for all parties to the quarrel, so that none would have an unfair advantage. The lads who have been dying for us by the hundred thousand have taken no part in the affairs of their country, or in bringing about the quarrel, and it seems hard that they should have to repair at such a cost the mischief caused by their fathers.

We do not suggest that the loss of so many young lives is regarded lightly by most of those old enough to be held responsible for the government of their country. People are not so bad as that, and thousands of fathers would gladly have taken their sons' places, if that were possible. But we meet an astonishing number of people who have no sons of military age, or whose sons have never entered the danger zone, though we know any number who have "given" nephews to the Army. For the rest, many are so lacking in imagination that it would be good for them to have the sense of personal responsibility for the policy of the country brought home to them by the constant knowledge that they might have to defend that policy in their own persons.

The adoption of our suggestion might lead people to study the, at present, utterly neglected subject of cause and effect in the life of peoples, and in the moral and spiritual world generally. In this chapter we shall endeavour, not to explore this subject exhaustively, for that is beyond our powers, but to indicate some of the lines on which enquiry and reflection should proceed, with a few concrete examples to illustrate our meaning. We shall not deal with the subject politically, but personally, believing that our politics are merely the expression of what we are individually.

And our politics to-day are very, very bad.

How many, for instance, have ever realized the fact that the false principles which so often rule our lives are of the same essential nature as the principles of Germany, and that the acts arising therefrom are made of the same stuff as the crimes of Germany? The difference is merely one of *degree*. There are two principles only in the world—good and evil—the one making for the state of things we desire, but have never yet seen, the other producing the state of things we see, and leading on to the even more terrible disasters which lie ahead if we persist in our obduracy. I see people genuinely shocked by the crimes of that degraded nation, but I see these same people guilty of hardness, unkind-

ness, spite, covetousness, vanity, falseness, "diplomacy," desire for domination, and other sins which find their full-grown fruit in Germanism. The vindictiveness which I evince towards my brother or sister, the relentlessness with which I pursue my desires regardless of the claims of others, the covetousness which leads me to set aside all considerations of mercy in pursuit of personal advancement; the falseness which, perhaps, lies at the root of my conventional respectability; all these motives which result from the enthronement of the *ego* in my life, are of the same essential nature as Germanism. We may grieve the loss of son, husband, father or brother in the war, but every false or selfish act we do is helping the evil cause which struck them down; it is a shot fired on behalf of the enemy.

Such motives and activities operating in our individual lives combine to make up a state of society whose natural fruits are war and the various other ills from which we suffer. It is extraordinary how people imagine they can do as they like, without realizing that there are results outside their immediate circle. But the broad river is made up of thousands of rivulets, and the character of its waters is determined by the characteristics of the waters contributed by each rivulet. In proportion as each brings iron, lime, magnesium, etc., so these will be found in the river. And the character of a nation and its government is determined in exactly the same way by the contribution of each member. Every individual motive and action, however secret, affects first the individual himself, and then the direct and indirect objects of his action. So all the things willed and done, whether in the secret chamber or in the market-place, come out again in the nation as a whole, and the nation as a whole, and even other nations, reap the fruits, be they sweet or bitter. .

In the last resort, the real conflict of to-day is the conflict between good and evil; if the conflict against evil is won, all is won; if this is lost, all is lost. The solidarity of evil is a truth which is little recognized,

'but it is an undeniable truth, and has tremendous implications. Even Euclidean logic should teach us that it is absurd to blaze with indignation against a nation which carries certain principles to their logical conclusion, if we ourselves act on those principles in our relations one with another, in our social, business and political life. If these are justified, then Germany is justified—"which is absurd." What right have we, so long as we carry on our own little guerilla warfare on the side of the devil, to rail at those who have gone over to him altogether, with the whole paraphernalia of high explosives and poison gas ?

We are not thinking of lapses, failures or even particularly of "sins" in the ordinary acceptance of the word. These all play their part ; but we are not in Heaven yet, and it is useless to ask for perfection or to expect it. We are thinking rather of the *principles* on which our lives are lived, and we do ask that these should be examined. We ask that, things having come to the present pass, people should set themselves to the study of good and evil—of right and wrong—that thus we might at least recognize the true nature of the principles which are enshrined in many of the laws of our land and in our admitted customs and bases of action, and perchance deliver ourselves from the morass of self-deception in which we are engulfed—that we might learn to know when we are on God's side and when we are on the devil's. If the great world-catastrophe has not made the reader sufficiently chastened to be willing to consider this, then we fear it is useless for him to follow these pages further. Throw the book away, or give it to some one who does care. We only regret that it is impracticable to give you your money back, for we have nothing for you.

2. THE WORKMAN AND HIS JUDGES.

Let us consider first the attitude of the "classes" one toward another. To save undue lengthiness we will

take the attitude of one class only, and we will take that class to which the writer belongs—the middle class. It is, of course, very unusual to make any reflection on the great middle class—the “backbone of the country”—but it is time that that class listened to something different from the flattery with which it is so commonly beslavered. The conventional attitude of this class towards the workers is probably the most potent cause of the unrest which keeps the community in a constant fever of apprehension and fear of social upheaval. This unfair and unkind attitude towards the workers would justify any class in being both restless and suspicious. In the grave labour difficulties which have confronted us during the war, we have reaped what we have sown. The policy of “down tools” at such a crisis may doubtless be rightly stigmatized as a crime, but we have to ask whose is the crime? If the war had been lost by a national strike, the middle class would have had to bear a large share of the awful guilt.

We hold no brief for the labour cause as such. “Labour” is usually understood to mean the organization which goes by that name, with its members; but we are speaking of the whole of the poorer classes, representing with their families three-fourths of the population. We take up their cause here, not to champion a labour programme, or to further any political view, but because the attitude of the class mentioned towards them illustrates in so many of its features what is wrong with the heart of society *as a whole*.

In correct middle-class society everybody, by common consent, bears false witness against the working man, chiefly with reference to his laziness, his drunkenness and the fabulous wages he receives. This doubtless arises sometimes from mere stupidity, for people of tragic stupidity abound in the middle class. But the chief element in the frame of mind that inspires these slanders is very often a consciousness of the thinness, and the unstable nature, of the partition which divides the two classes, and a mortal fear lest the speaker should

be suspected of having any connection or sympathy with the "lower" one. Yet, often enough, his father was an honest carpenter; but he, disdaining a trade, became an office boy, and has risen through the lower grades of clerkship to his present mediocre position, and now likes to pose as one whose natural instincts and sympathies are with the employing class. Some of my readers who are in this position, however, may be disconcerted to learn that they themselves are looked upon by the wealthy as still belonging to the "lower orders." Do you realize what a rod you are making for your own back when you throw your influence on the side of those who are inimical to "the workers," when you buy their newspapers, repeat their catchwords, ape their manners—to their immense amusement—and vote for their men? This, of course, ought not to influence you, but it is as well that you should know it.

The tales of the delinquencies of the workers, *as workers*, with which we are regaled in train, club or restaurant, are not redeemed from falseness by the protestations of first-hand knowledge with which they are generally embellished. The narrator usually "can vouch for it," or "knew the case himself," or "had it from his brother, who employs five hundred men"—all little touches of embroidery with which it is usual to adorn every bit of third-hand slander against our poorer brethren. No doubt, among the millions of workers, there are sufficient faults, if we knew them all, to keep a club coterie on the chatter all the year round, but so there are among any other class, and the constant effort to seize upon and magnify the faults of a class which is less fortunate, but no less worthy, than our own, always strikes the writer as peculiarly mean and unmanly. When these stories do contain an element of truth (as what lie does not?) the fault that is found often arises from an utter ignorance of the working man's problems and of the warfare which has been forced on him by his employers, by means of which alone he has attained his

present very insecure normal standard of wages and independence.

Probably the worst sin that can fairly be laid to the charge of some of the workers, *as workers*, is the practice known as "ca' canny," the principle of giving the minimum of service for a minimum wage. If they only realized it, they themselves are the greatest losers by this, losers in body, intellect and character. Think of the pure and holy joy there is in doing an honest bit of work honestly; putting your back into it, being absorbed—lost—in it; seeing it grow under your hands till the shapeless mass becomes a finished instrument, the heaps of brick and sand and lime become a house that shall be a joy to dwell in, or even until the chaotic heaps of papers and figures become an orderly and true statement of account. The breathing comes deeper and more regular; the heart beats stronger and with truer rhythm; the courage and the spirits rise, and the whole man is exalted. Think of the dull misery, on the other hand, of doing as little as you can, unwillingly, grudgingly, resentfully, without an eye on the desired goal; wearily watching the clock round; gloomily, vengefully gratified to hear another whistle blow, and the job not yet done. Such "work" neither expands the chest, nor quickens the pulse, nor brightens the eye, but dwarfs and degrades the "worker," body, mind and soul.

But who has driven the workman to invent this wretched system? One of the largest manufacturers in the kingdom, a generous, kind-hearted man, was inveighing a little while ago against the workers' practices, and against Trades Unionism generally. He was asked what rate of wages the manufacturers would be willing to pay if the workmen did not combine in their own protection. That would, of course, be determined by the state of the labour market, was the answer. The question was urged, Would you pay a skilled worker twopence an hour if you could get him for three-halfpence? Well, was the reply, we should have to do the same as other employers.

Every one knows this is true, and it is mean and unchivalrous for the well-fed middle classes to conspire as they do, almost with one consent, to defame the workers, and in nearly every labour dispute to range themselves against them. They seldom study the rights of the case, with the result that they are frightfully ignorant concerning the conditions which govern the lives of three-quarters of their fellow-countrymen, though they are always well primed with tittle-tattle against them.

How would my middle-class reader like the workers to get hold of a garbled version of that last little difference of opinion between him and his employers on the subject of salary or commission, or of the duties for which he was responsible? In the workers' case the dispute was over a matter of two shillings a week, in yours it was two pounds. How would you like the *Daily Stunt* to take up the case against you, poison the people's minds against you, call you shirker, traitor, pro-German, and recommend that you should be sent to the front out of hand? It is not uncommon to meet people whose one suggested remedy for a strike is to "take the blighters out and shoot them." Coming home in the train one evening, and attempting to read, the writer was distracted, and compelled to drop his book, by a passenger holding forth angrily about a threatened wages dispute. This dispute never materialized—the workers gave in with one accord, from motives of pure patriotism, for it was a time of national crisis—yet even at that incipient stage the passenger was seriously recommending that ten of the men should be shot each morning, till the rest gave in. It may be thought that this particular individual was a somewhat rare type of fanatic, but he was a respected landowner in the district, and was listened to deferentially—though not by the writer. He then proceeded to complain of the ineptitude of the Food Controller, whose policy, he averred, was leading farmers to slaughter their cattle at the least favourable time. "You can't expect farmers to wait, and lose five shillings a stone on their beasts every week," he said; "it's not

in human nature." Not a word about taking the farmers out and shooting them, although it was a matter of the people's food, and although there was no real question of a loss of five shillings per stone, but only of a possible deduction of five shillings from the maximum profit on which the farmer had set his heart.

It is not our object to canonize the workers, or to pretend that they are better than any other class. We only maintain that they are no worse. The whole evil arises from the fact that *they act on the same principle as the employers*. It is no more wicked to give the least possible work for wages received than it is to give the least possible wages for work received. The spirit is fatal on either side, and is symptomatic of the selfish and mischievous state of heart of members of the community generally one towards another. It absolutely bars all prospect of justice and peace between classes—as between nations—so long as it continues. Nothing that the trades unions or the labour party hope to effect on the one hand, and nothing the employers may do on the other, will ever secure a happier state of affairs. The workers are counting on the defeat of the capitalists, or—in the words of the socialist leaders—"the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie"; the capitalists, for their part, trust to the defeat of the workers; and then—each thinks—there will be peace.

Yes, there would be peace, of a sort, and for a time. So, if Germany had won the war, there would be a "sort of peace" for those of us who consented to continue to live under such degrading conditions. And peace between capitalists and workers on such lines would be a "German peace." A change of heart is necessary. The middle classes must learn to exercise love and justice towards their fellows; the employers and capitalists, instead of fighting the workers, must fight *for* them, and take the lead in securing them enjoyable conditions of life, and in so arranging the principles of taxation, and the land and other laws of the country, as to ensure that fair a proportion of the wealth created by industry

shall automatically flow back to those who have taken so large a part in creating it. *

The writer has sometimes succeeded in convincing—against their wills—those who have indulged in the more grotesque yarns about the workers' wages and drink. He has been able to show that, in normal times, the lives of millions are one continual tragedy—and sometimes very heroic tragedy—often with no future but the workhouse, and that even with war-time wages, *as appearing from actual pay sheets*, the case is often little better, the increases being insignificant compared with the tales that are told, and being swallowed up by increased prices. He has shown that the amount spent on drink by thousands of middle-class men is so enormous that, if the workers knew it, they would be astounded, and marvel that any one could have such an income as to be able to afford it. He has pointed out how the speakers themselves have opposed every effort to deal with the drink question, and how ill it becomes them to complain of the natural fruits of their own policy.

But all in vain. The working-man is not to be allowed a chance. I don't care, is the reply, what the working-man earns, or what he drinks, but—*he doesn't work*.

Now, is this true, or is it a lie? Because, if it is a lie, it is a very wicked one. Is the working-man really lazier than the people who wax eloquent over his shortcomings, as they go up to town by the nine or ten o'clock train—when he has already put in half a morning's work? Let us grant that, since the war, we are no longer justified in asking Lord Beaconsfield's conundrum "why the clerks in government offices are like the fountains in Trafalgar Square." The fountains are no longer "playing from ten to four," and we trust the same is true of government clerks.

But about the workman? Surely he does do something, after all. Wherever I go, unless I leave the habitations of men altogether, and retire to trackless desert or virgin forest, I see, and use, and am sustained by the

fruit of his labour. I look down, and up, and around me as I write, and can see nothing that I do not owe to the working-man. Let the reader try it, wherever he is, as he reads these words. My clothes are made by him (of course, I include his wife and daughter) from fabric woven by his hands, out of material grown by his labour. I sit down to breakfast, at a table which is his handiwork, to the food which his activities have produced, or which he has brought me from foreign shores at the risk—and often at the sacrifice—of his life. I sally forth over roads laid by his sinews to the railway station which he has erected, and take my place in the train which he has built, trusting without a thought to the working-man in the signal box who watches over my life, and relying on the working-man on the footplate to take me safely to my destination, as I whirl smoothly over the rails laid by his brother workers. At business we deal in the products of his labour, which we buy, and sell, and chaffer over, and profit in. Wherever we may be, unless we are under the open vault of heaven, whether we work, or rest, or play, or pray, we cast our eyes around and see the work of his hands. Without him we should be hungry, naked and homeless; in one week he could make us shorter of food than four years of war have done. If it is our wont to kneel at night and thank God for His good gifts of the day, it would not come amiss for us at that hour to remember that we have lived and received strength for the day by the grace of God and by the labours of the working-man.

This is not to deny to others their share—the “brain” workers, the superintendents, the traffickers; but it is remarkable how much more easily we could afford to dispense with many of these—some of whose activities, in fact, are entirely harmful and parasitical—than we could with the much despised workman.

And for over four years he has been fighting—dying—for us, or starving in a German prison camp, while his gallant critics have been discussing him over their three-course luncheons; for the people and the news-

papers who are the most fulsome in their flattery of him when he is in khaki are his most inveterate slanderers when he is in his overalls.

8. RESPECTABLE PEOPLE.

Some may imagine that the attitude we have referred to is but the natural—if foolish—prejudice of a class, that it is mere talk, *and that no harm comes of it*. Nothing could be more erroneous. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he”—and as a man thinketh in his heart, so he does. The man who thinks foolishly or criminally acts foolishly or criminally. Our thoughts are materialized into action, with the result that our whole social order, and history and fate, are the outcome of our state of mind. By buying and reading the newspapers of the workers’ enemies, we not only debauch our own minds, we enrich and reinforce those enemies till they become so powerful as to hold the lives of governments, and the reputations of men—and even, humanly speaking, the fate of the world—in their hands. By yielding to selfish passions against a less secure and fortunate class than our own, we are led to cast our votes in favour of those who grudge them the small measure of freedom—freedom to be *men*—that they have attained, and whose set purpose it is to rob them of it. We are shocked at the horrors of war, but by social injustice we cause sufferings and desolations so acute and widespread, that the apologists for war, among their many excuses for it, have been able to urge that the casualties of war are not greatly in excess of the casualties of peace. Let no man think he is free to hold what social or political views he pleases, for when we give expression to those views at the polling booth, in that vote comes out the essence of what we are, and what we desire; and this is shortly reflected in our legislation, and in the lives—and deaths—of our fellow-men. If, in exercising that citizen responsibility, we are actuated by unworthy motives, then we are verily guilty before God for the consequences, however fatal.

Can we touch the consciences of any of our readers by reminding them what a labour contest in normal times is really like? Bear in mind that, as already shown, the workers would suffer even more acutely if they had never resorted to such contests. The worker's one weapon is the amount of inconvenience or loss of profits he may be able to cause the employer. The weapon of the employer is—*hunger*. What an unequal contest! What a loading of the dice! Which of our readers will have the courage to try it for himself, to enable him to appreciate the worker's position? Go really short of food for a few weeks, till you are weak and ill. Then get up one winter morning to find, not only no breakfast, but no fire. You have not slept warm, for the blankets are pawned. We cannot ask you to experiment also on your children, but imagine—if you can—that the young rascals who are making merry at the breakfast table are ill and hungry—that they have no breakfast, and are crying with cold. Imagine that the rosy cheeked little cherub you left in bed at its mother's breast is puny, wailing, hollow-eyed; that the mother, worn out by privation and worry, has nothing for it. And then, to see no hope; to know that the lock-out funds are exhausted, and it will soon be a case of "hands up"; that you have been weakened, and your children's development stunted—and perhaps the seeds of lifelong disease implanted in them—in vain. Such considerations may not perhaps determine the rights of any particular labour dispute, but they ought to check the light-hearted snobbery that blinds you to every consideration of justice and of humanity.

It is the *respectable* sins of society—and the sins of respectable society—that are the chief cause of the miseries of Christendom; the greatest of its evils arise from sins about which people have no conscience at all. It is not our drunkards, our wastrels, our criminal classes, who are responsible for the present state of affairs. The influence of these on the life of the community is comparatively negligible; often, indeed, they themselves

are the victims of the successful and dominant classes. Yet the latter have not yet even begun to question their own impeccability. The "respectable" classes can be convicted out of their own mouths of being the chief cause of whatever is wrong in the state of society. Do they not claim to be "influential"? If any class is more responsible than another for the present world disorder, is it not the class which claims to influence public events? And, public events being what they are, it would seem that, in the Day of Judgment, it would be better for us if we could put in a plea that we were *not* "influential people."

In listening to the current ideas, so freely and shamelessly expressed, by the passenger with his *Times* in the corner of the first-class "smoker," by the man one meets in business who insists on airing his views, by the customer sitting opposite at luncheon in the restaurant, reading extracts from the "patriotic" press, and commenting on them like a preacher commenting on the reading lesson as he goes along, the writer has often positively shivered with horror. *These*—he has reflected—these are the men in whose hands the fate of the country lies; not the thinkers, not the devoted and enlightened men who are striving to insert real ideas into the heads of the people, but the conventional worshipper of himself and his class, the unreflecting inheritor of the smug traditions and prejudices of that class, the man with a seemingly constitutional incapacity for anything that can be called an *idea*. Such men may be personally charming; they may be quite conscientious regarding the very circumscribed matters which they conceive to fall within the sphere of their obligations, yet often they exhibit no more intelligent sense of their responsibility towards the class "beneath" them, and no more compunction concerning them, than the Prussian exhibits concerning the inhabitants of an occupied territory. The conscience, for all large purposes, is darkened, smothered. The inveterate habit of accepting and cultivating only those ideas which fit in with their convenience

and supposed interests, has produced in this class a smugness and self-complacency—a “fatness of heart”—which well-nigh drive a lover of his kind to despair.

And the malady is general; the atrophy of conscience that has crept over the people as a result of increasing devotion each to their own short-sighted interests, has become a disaster of the first magnitude. It has stupefied the moral intellect, perverted the moral ideal, and left the world to be governed by principles whose fruits are only too evident in the present world disorder. The whole thing must be reversed, or civilization must go down in ruin.

Many will say, “You are asking too much; you will never change human nature.”

Very well, then; we must leave the matter to you. Find your own remedy. But, unless you find a remedy, you have *this* to face; just as the casting off of moral restraint led to Bolshevism in Russia, so this same cause will lead to equally terrible things at home. If revolution and red ruin lie before us, this will not be the outcome of the triumph of the working classes whom you so much dislike; it will be the result of the ghastly immoralism which lies hidden under the mask of our conventional respectability.

4. CHRIST AND RESPECTABILITY.

One of the weaknesses of the present age is the lack of a gifted satirist to wake us up to the fact that our present life is largely built on a substratum of humbug. We do not seem able to produce such a man, or, at any rate, one who can arrest the public attention. Those writers who have the knack of catching the public ear seem to be writing for money; we have still to wait for the one who will write because the spirit within him *compels* him to write; who will write only what he feels in his very bones, for love of the people. We do not want a cynic—one who finds enjoyment and amusement in the falsities and shams of his age—but a kindly-hearted

genius, whose kindliness and sympathy would only give him a keener and more analytical insight into the depths of our lives. A man with a sense of humour, arising from a well-balanced sense of congruity, with its corresponding sensitiveness to incongruity. The loss of the sense of humour is a perilous step on the way to the loss of our soul, and the way we are going, we bid fair to become as void of humour as the Germans. A journalist with a notorious past—and present, who has done many things—and many people—in his time, constitutes himself a censor of public morals—and no one laughs. A man who is in politics for business purposes talks from the top of a tank about being in the war to his last shilling, while he is making fifty per cent. on his war contracts—and there is not a smile. A society is formed to re-impose conditions of servitude from which we had been freed at great price; they call it the ——— “*Reform*” society—yet not a titter is heard. The people are the slaves of words; if a society should be formed to re-introduce slavery, it may safely call itself the Liberty League, and no one will think it funny.

Even if our satirist did no more than disturb our present complacency, the age would owe him a greater debt than it has owed to any writer for many a long year. There are a thousand comfortable conventions, specious catch-words, cant phrases and smug hypocrisies, only waiting the touch of a master hand to make them fall to pieces like a house of cards, and to render this age the derision of a more enlightened one, should such an age follow ours. And with them would fall the fortunes and ascendancy of those whose business it is to cultivate our weaknesses, and to reap a golden harvest by trading on them. The sins and weaknesses of the people are the stock-in-trade of whole hordes of adventurers whose direct interest it is to keep us blinded and fooled, and who would turn cold as death if they thought we were really coming at last to our senses.

We do not think it would be out of place, or that it would be irreverent, to apply the term Satirist to One

whose words are still current among us, if only we would heed them. We seem to remember something He said about making clean the outside of the cup and platter—and to-day we rub the outside of the crockery till it shines again, though those who drink out of the cup are still poisoned. He spoke of men who, like whited sepulchres, were fair to look upon from without, while inside they were full of corruption and all uncleanness—and still we gaze with admiration on the fair exterior, and wonder where the stench and the pestilence come from. If a man to-day finds it necessary to divert attention from his own misdeeds, he has only to foam in public about the real or imaginary crimes of some one he has got his knife into, and the people are put off the scent, and take up the new trail as a dog follows aniseed. Yet when Christ recommended that he that was without sin should cast the first stone, surely this was not only to teach us that we cannot put God off our trail by pointing to the sins of others; it was also to give us the benefit of His wisdom, and teach us to inquire into the sincerity of those who are so anxious to stone their fellows.

Doubtless, according to the etiquette of those days, it was an atrocious thing for Him to speak as He did; atrocious for Him to say openly just what He knew—and what, probably, most people knew—about people of good standing. Atrocious, too, it was doubtless considered, for Him to blaze abroad the facts as to how they made their money—setting class against class—to scoff at their meticulousness over the small change of religious observances, while they neglected the sterling matters of the law—justice, mercy and the love of God. And who could forgive Him that final ineptitude—according to the canons of those days—of telling “respectable” and religious people they were going to hell? Those who were thus gibbeted certainly could not; and so they crucified Him.

But it was not only His words; His *life* rebuked them. The very manner of His coming poured scorn on the standards of value of that age—and of our own. If

He meant—as doubtless He did—to show what was His estimate of the things the world gloried in, then He did it perfectly—as He has done all things perfectly—in leaving us the record of that Divine Irony, the birth in the stable.

We do not infer from that sublime event that Christ puts a premium on poverty or on squalid conditions. So soon as there was room His parents moved with Him into a house—the proper place for human beings. But in entering a world where there were poor, and distressed, and despised—people who were “crowded out”—He voluntarily took His place with these, and shared their lot.

What “Christians” we are to-day, if Christianity means following Christ! The constant effort of to-day is always to try and move in the circle which is a little above our own. Not only is this assiduously practised, but it is professed and taught with equal assiduity, for in this respect our profession and our practice coincide. Always choose friends who can push you on; secure admission to the circles which will enable you to rise; refuse to know poor people, much less count them among your friends; let them go on living in stables—or in pig-styes if they cannot find stables—but you, *get on*.

This, of course, quite rules out the Carpenter as a possible acquaintance. How thankful some of us must be that He is not a carpenter now. A plaster cast in a Roman Catholic cathedral, a mysterious Presence somewhere behind the altar, or even a glorified Christ who rose and ascended so long ago that His lowly condition on earth may well be forgotten, such a Christ may claim the worship. But to have to own in practice that our greatest Friend, to whom we are indebted for everything, was a working man, that if He were still on earth we should have to be followers of one of that class, *or give up Christ*, this would bring us to a Valley of Decision from which many of us would be tempted to emerge, after many searchings of heart, at the wrong end.

Few will care to deny that material “prosperity”

is the great object of human ambition, and we certainly do not intend to enter any protest against the very natural dread of poverty and squalor. We do right to shudder at the thought of falling into this horrible pit, this pit of poverty which has been dug by the spade of avarice; but we ought equally to shudder at the thought of others falling into it, and struggling all their lives in its depths. If the reasonable desire for material prosperity were pursued in company and sympathy with all our fellows, instead of singly and selfishly; if it did not lead us to shove aside other seekers, and lead us, too, to be false to ourselves and our own true interests, we should be inclined to say that it was merely evidence of a natural and healthy instinct. We do well to equip ourselves by study and hard work to be of value to the community, and to make the most of our lives. But every one knows that these innocent methods are not the only means—or even the principal means—adopted with the object of getting on; and every one ought to know that “getting on” often means making the worst, instead of the best, of our lives, even to the suicide of our own souls. Life has become a veritable “gold rush,” with all the selfishness and ruthlessness of the wildest gold rush in the Wild West, and this has developed a society which differs only in externals from the society of the mining camps and cities pictured by Bret Harte and his school of writers.

The false views of life to which we are calling attention have led to the practical regarding of “respectability” as being synonymous with virtue, and squalor with sin. We know that many will hotly deny this, and we admit that no one would put forth such a proposition in plain words. We admit that lip service is paid to the truth that God judges without respect of persons. A thousand pronouncements can be pointed to from pulpit, platform, and press, in which it is constantly protested that God accepts the poor equally with the rich, that there is no difference in His sight. But verily they protest too much. The very tone of such protestations shows that the speakers or writers are only half persuaded of what

they say, and that their own feeling in the matter does not coincide with the divine valuation. With what unction, thinking to magnify God's mercy, does the preacher often declare that God accepts "even" the raggedest man from the slums as freely as the lady in her silks and furs. But, *why should He not?* What attitude towards rich and poor is at the back of the preacher's mind that he should think *this* so very wonderful on God's part? Do not such protestations show that, subconsciously, the speaker prefers the rich person, and considers him or her naturally more acceptable? If they want to magnify God's mercy, next time they preach on Dives and Lazarus, let them show that "even" Dives might have been saved. Let them declare that He will save "even" the slum landlord, or the sweating employer who sits in the best pew. That would indeed be a miracle of grace. Societies which conduct the various missions to the poor accept the subscriptions of brewers, and all kinds of oppressors and exploiters, and send their missionaries into the East End preaching doctrines which they would not dare to preach to their subscribers, or, at any rate, not with the same personal application with which they apply them to their hearers in the slums. At their annual functions, they have these patrons on their platforms, but they do not tell them they are "hell-deserving sinners." On the contrary, they thank and flatter them for their help in the good work, and laud absent subscribers by name. If they acted consistently with what they preach to the poor, and with their usual manner of presenting their doctrines, they would have to turn round to their patrons and say, My dear sirs, if you do not repent you will go to hell, and all your miserable doles will not save you. They profess to lose no opportunity of speaking to a man "about his soul." Why, then, when these people offer them money for the work of converting the poor, do they not turn round on them and say, "Good God! man; this is no business of yours; you need converting yourself"?

We are neither attacking nor defending the crude manner in which the gospel is presented to the poor—though we think it should be presented alike to all classes. Our object is to point out that, among the various reasons and motives—some of them very sinister—which restrain these good people from exercising the barest logic and consistency, one reason is that they do not really believe that God will deal so unceremoniously with these eminent persons as He will with the fish porter and the hawker. Few people really believe, deep down in their hearts, in the just judgment of God; the impression still obtains that He will judge people in their clothes. It is idle to quote pronouncements from the preaching of these people to prove that we are wrong in what we say; we cite their *actions* to prove that we are right. “The Almighty will think twice before damning a man of *his* quality,” is still the subconscious feeling when they find themselves in the august presence of their well-dressed and prosperous patrons.

The same assumption—with occasional exceptions, which are meant to be striking, and which show how tenaciously the minds of the writers are bound by the rule—underlies the religious literature on which our young people are raised. It is nearly always assumed that the comfortable classes are qualified, not merely to provide soup kitchens for the poor, but also to dispense *spiritual* pea-soup to them. If occasionally we get an instance of a poor man or woman being used for the spiritual awakening of their betters, it is presented as something abnormal, as when Rome was saved by the geese.

Of course these stories are very touching. Of course the present writer read them—and wept over them—in his youth. The cold and shivering little heroine, ragged and barefoot; the sufferings she endured; her ignorance until the kind lady—whom she took for an angel—took pity on her, and showed her she was a sinner, and gave her something to eat and a blanket for her dying mother, and a beautiful bunch of white lilies for the funeral

when the mother died ; and finally—undreamt-of happiness—took her into her service as a kitchen-maid ; wages not stated. Not one word of protest against the iniquity of which child and mother were victims—the father died of consumption, brought on by work and want, being too poorly paid to afford the food and fresh air which might have saved him—not one flash of holy anger against the outrage of the nation's children being allowed to go naked and hungry while the nation's larder is bursting with delicacies, and its emporiums overflowing with fineries. All this taken for granted, as providing a suitable atmosphere for the story—a divinely arranged background for the benevolent activities of the banker's wife. And all this as the outcome of the incorrigible snobbery which makes the poor always wrong.

Snobbery is daily damning more souls than drink.

5. THE SIN OF SNOBBERY.

Like almost every evil of to-day, the sin of snobbery is highly organized. We have touched on the question of "Bible difficulties," but one of the scriptures which the writer finds it hardest to believe is that which says "Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird." Is it true, after all, that "they didn't know everything down in Judee," or is it that we have degenerated—that the birds have become less "fly"—since those words were written? For the workings of this organization are open—patent—yet the birds rush eagerly into its reticulations.

A society is formed—we will call it The Society for the Propagation of Sin and Snobbery. That is not what its promoters call it, for among its professed objects are religion and—of course—"patriotism." The Society's methods are well known. It promotes, not serious meetings, to discuss and thresh out questions honestly, but "functions," where the visitors are to a certain extent guests, and cannot very well express their dissent from

anything they hear. Refreshments, music, dancing on the lawn, are among the "attractions," and we should be the last to say a word against any who should provide the people with these innocent recreations *for the people's sake*. But every one who goes, except the very simple, knows it is not done for their sakes—knows it is a net spread to catch them—and yet they go. For there is to be another great attraction, and those who may be proof against tea and cake—and even dancing—will fall to this lure. It is the appeal to the instinct we have mentioned. Lord Snobbin (O.B.E.) has graciously consented to preside. He is a man of no understanding, and cannot speak, as one visitor observes, "for toffee," but that does not matter. What is more to the purpose, our own local gentry are going to be there, "grand masters" and "grand mistresses" of the Society galore. They are going to talk with us, even shake hands with us, perhaps; and Lady Snobelle will move in and out among us, "just as if she was one of ourselves," and—who knows?—may even ask us if we will take any more tea. Vicars and curates from the surrounding parishes will also attend, to degrade their sacred calling, to betray their Master, and to lend a spurious air of sanctity to this great "stunt" of seducing the people.

Now these gentry are catering for a good many people who are already of their cast of mind. Let them go. But perhaps you, rightly or wrongly, are of a different persuasion, and would never dream of doing anything to help on their cause. But think of the people you will mix with, and get to know! Perhaps you are a young wife, and you consider your husband's position—for he is getting on—entitles you to know a "better class of people." You *would* so like to go. You have some qualms, however. You love and honour the memory of your father, whose heart was with the people; and he taught you some things that you *know* are true, and that you can never forget. You know that the object of the promoters of the function is one that you loathe in your heart of hearts; it is to maintain and increase

by political means their grip on the life and fate of the people. You hate their policy of reaction, repression and oppression. You know their weapons—illegitimate influence and intimidation; you know their fruits—social injustice, tyranny, and *war*. Knowing all this, look into the face of the babe you hold on your knee. Reflect that their policy may condemn him one day to lie, a mangled mass of mud and blood—moaning for one touch of your hand, one look from your eyes, one last word from your lips—on some stricken field where the cult that you are coquetting with bears its natural and inevitable fruit. Accept the invitation if you will, but—when that day comes—remember!

Yet perhaps I am mistaken. Perhaps you know what you are about. The connections you will form for your child may be invaluable, and when war comes may provide him with an “indispensable” post at home, far from machine gun and poison gas, and it may be another mother’s child that will lie there. But, in the great Judgment Day, I would rather be that bereaved and desolated mother than you.

How many have changed their politics, and the whole trend of their sympathies and their attitude to their fellows, as a result of being debauched by such methods as these. We do not claim your adhesion to any political party; we are simply warning you that to join *any* party, or any church, from such base motives, is to imperil your immortal soul. But many are perverted by much simpler means than those we have described. When you reach a certain position in life, people will invite you to apostasize, baldly, openly, with no pretence of honesty and no sense of shame. A friend of the writer’s, who had been a workman, on becoming an employer of a considerable number of men, was openly invited to join what the tempter described as the “employers’ party,” for no professed reason except that his interests now lay with that party. In another instance a friend who had risen from the ranks of the workers was urged, *for the same reason*, to join the Established Church.

And these people, debauchers and debauched alike, have no idea of the sin they are guilty of—see no inconsistency, after such a betrayal, in going to church, and being “pious.” This is the darkness we complain of, a darkness that oppresses, smothers, chokes us; the darkness of an obfuscation of conscience, a benighted state of heart, that is blind to the heinousness of bartering faith and fatherland for patronage and influence. It is making a mock of God; it is betraying your country to its enemies as surely as if you betrayed it to Germany. It is perilously near the sin for which Judas Iscariot was damned. When you sell your soul to the highest bidder, it is vain for you to comfort yourself with the old platitude that one church is as good as another—that “we are all going to the same heaven by different roads.” My friend, you are not going to heaven at all; you have no chance whatever unless you repent. And neither have you, ladies and gentlemen—the seducers—unless *you* repent.

6. THE RED HARVEST OF SNOBBERY.

Few people realize that a tedious and silly function such as we have referred to really has a tangible effect on the affairs of the world; and few recognize their responsibility for the bloodshed and misery that may be the outcome of the policies which they endorse by their presence and support. Yet we are quick to impute responsibility when it is a question of our enemies. We realize that although—so far as we know—the Kaiser has never personally outraged one Belgian woman, or bayoneted one Belgian child, yet he is really guilty of those atrocities. We realize that the guilt is shared by the mass of the German people, though many of these would possibly be revolted if these outrages were perpetrated before their eyes. In the same way, many of our dear ladies, fluttering their handkerchiefs, and cheering with their silvery voices, would be revolted if they saw the tragedies which are the real fruit of the policies they shout for so thoughtlessly, so foolishly and so falsely.

We recognize the responsibility of the German people for the crimes of their statesmen and soldiers because they have supported a policy which involves those crimes. But this principle of responsibility runs through all our lives, whether we recognize it or not. Think of the appalling outrages in Armenia. Try and realize it, you giddy women and girls, if you can spare the time to think of anything but your fancy stockings. Have you ever seen a man die a violent death? Why should I spare your feelings, when your sisters have been systematically butchered for decades past, and you have never spared them one thought, or checked one giggle for their sakes? I think of the night when I came across men with lanterns picking up the spattered brains of my friend on the railway line, putting them in a clean white handkerchief, through which the blood was oozing. One such experience leaves an indelible cicatrix on the memory for the rest of life. And I remember that this sort of thing has happened a million times in Armenia, not by accident as in my friend's case, but by the deliberate fiendishness of men, the men to whom we delivered up that tortured nation as a result of our "politics." And the issues of those politics were not determined by an anxious weighing of the rights and wrongs of the matter—not by any consideration for the lives and honour of your betrayed sisters—but by such base, and frivolous, and mercenary considerations as those we have indicated. You now have the vote, my dears, but if you use it as many of you have used the influence you have already enjoyed, then, from all your tender mercies, Good Lord deliver us!

For the past quarter of a century, the chief industry of Turkey has been outrage. Even before the commencement of the "massacres," properly so called, orders had been received in various parts of the Turkish dominions, especially in Armenia, forbidding the use of the native language, under penalty that the offender should have his tongue cut out. Perhaps you will realize this better if you try to imagine the Kaiser having been victorious in the war, and forbidding *you* to speak any-

thing but German, under penalty of the same mutilation. He is fool enough, and criminal enough, for anything, and would have been tenfold worse had he been victorious. Possibly this reflection will dispose you to a sense of your responsibility for a more careful, and honest, and conscientious use of your tongues while you have them.

Tortures of the most horrible character which the ingenuity of savages could devise, assassinations, pillage, violations of women, these have been regular and constant features of Turkish policy. In one case, at Urfa, on the testimony of a high British official who was sent to examine and report—Mr. Gerald Fitzmaurice, Chief Dragoman at the British Embassy—the Armenians took shelter in the cathedral. A certain sheik ordered about a hundred young Armenians to be thrown on their backs and held down by their hands and feet. He then proceeded, while reciting verses from the Koran, to cut their throats, after the Mecca rite of sacrificing sheep. The next day was Sunday, and there were three thousand refugees in the cathedral, the men on the ground floor and the women and children above. The men were butchered, their bodies soaked with petroleum and ignited, and the women and children burnt to death in the fire thus created. The above specific incidents are taken from *The Life of Abdul Hamid*, by Sir Edwin Pears, one of the most highly respected members of the British community in Constantinople, a man whose veracity and integrity are unimpeachable, and who bears emphatic testimony to the honesty and virtues of the Armenians. The general facts, however, have been available to everybody, being reported in the papers from time to time while the events were proceeding.

At a lecture in the Albert Hall, at Nottingham, a series of pictures of events in Armenia was recently shown on the screen. One was a photograph of a family of Armenian girls, comely, modest, refined. "These girls and women," said the lecturer, "hold their honour as dear as do you Englishwomen; dearer, in fact, than many women and girls in this country." He then threw on the screen a

photograph of one such girl as she had been found, headless, outraged, mutilated. Everything was shown in its appalling nakedness—the disordered dress, the exposed and abused body, with the severed head stuck up beside it—the mad terror with which the victim had met her fate being depicted in every ghastly feature.

The effect on the audience was as if they had received a violent physical blow. Cold, deadly horror seized the hearts of strong soldiers present—men who had faced death in some of its worst forms—while the women shrieked, and hid their faces, or made as if they would rush from the building.

But what were we doing, and what were our women doing, while these fiends were at their work? Did no echo of the agonized shrieks of these girls, as they were being done to death, ever reach these shores? If it did, it fell for the most part on deaf ears. We were busy making money, busy seeking amusement; we were being seduced by the soft blandishments of our women into buying programmes for the annual function of the Society for the Suppression of Popular Government, whose objects are to assimilate our institutions as closely as possible to those of Turkey. And when some of our representatives in Parliament referred plainly to the Sultan's guilt for these outrages, they were rebuked for speaking disrespectfully of a monarch "with whom His Majesty is in friendly relations."

In many cases we were hurriedly skipping these pages of our papers and turning to something more amusing. If earnest men sought to enlist our sympathies and help, we voted them bores. If they convened protest meetings, the meetings fell flat, and the local dignitaries whom they got to preside often did their best to wet-blanket any undue enthusiasm. They were often more concerned to "prevent Britain being dragged in" than to help the Armenians. We were taking no risks; and the Turk knew it—and smiled. There were "no gold-fields in Armenia," and most of us did not allow these things to turn us out of the normal course of our lives to do any-

thing at all. A visit to the theatre, the latest Church squabble, a chance of a rise in salary, a new frock, or a bit of ribbon for our hat, occupied a far larger place in our thoughts than this torture of our brothers and sisters. In our attitude to great questions of state we acted as though these horrors were not our business, and allowed that attitude, and our actions flowing therefrom, to be determined by the base and selfish considerations which so largely rule our lives. And it would be fairly safe to hazard the statement that, out of those of our readers who are in the habit of praying daily for forgiveness of sins, not one in ten has ever confessed *this* sin, though the blood of these martyred myriads is surely on our heads.

It is not only the light of the revelation of God's truth that has become darkened; the very light of nature, the light of reason and of conscience, has become overwhelmed in obscurity. The instances we have given are only *examples*, out of a thousand, of the ways in which our actions bear such terrible fruits. And this is not merely because we act in ignorance—because we are not skilled to foresee all the results of our actions—it is because the general conscience of the community allows it to act on base and egoistic principles in the various responsibilities of life, without troubling what the result may be, whether abroad or at home, so long as we think our own immediate interests are served.

The only excuse that we might make—if indeed it *were* an excuse, and we had not Christ's own teaching always available to guide us—is that very often we are not taught any better. Thus, the minister exhorts his congregation to "keep God's holy will and commandments," and goes on consorting and conniving with those whose lives are a constant infraction of those commandments—encouraging and helping them along the road to hell. The revivalist gets people crying all over the floor of the chapel about their "sins," and seldom tells them what their real sins are, with the result that, when they are "converted," they go on doing the same things.

Religion seems to be regarded as a thing apart; a kind of deferential raising of the hat to God, as though He does not know what we do when we think His back is turned. For the Establishment, "sin" seems to mean insubjection of workmen to their employers, and, for the Nonconformists, drink, bad language, and staying away from chapel. There seems to be a general idea that we can curry favour with God by "playing up" to Him on stated occasions, whether at ordinary "divine worship" or at Special Intercession Services. This idea of God is an insult to Him. We do not give Him credit even for ordinary intelligence. The knowledge of the Holy One is understanding, but we have an utterly false and unwarranted conception concerning Him, and consequently our understanding is darkened. Our light has become darkness. Yet the true light is shining around us, ready to break into every heart that is willing to be honest, and that really wants the truth. Until we are prepared for this *we should do better to stay away from church*, for God does not like being mocked. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" He asks. "Who has required this at your hand, to tread My courts? It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. When you make many prayers, I will *not* hear; your hands are full of blood."

"Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call *this* a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not *this* the fast that I have chosen—to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"

"*Then* shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall

be your rereward. *Then* shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am."

When the patriarch Job was provoked by his somewhat trying friends into speaking up for himself, how did he protest his righteousness? Surely he was a religious man, if ever there was one, and probably "went to church" more often than many who plume themselves on their devotion. But it never occurs to him to claim that any such observances will justify him. Though he has God constantly before him, yet it is his record in his dealings *with his fellow-man* that he pleads. He realizes that, if his local politics have not been pure, he has not a leg to stand on. Therefore he says, "I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the prey out of his teeth." "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me." "*The cause that I knew not I searched out.*" "If I despised the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant," he asks, "what shall I do when God riseth up? and when He visiteth, what shall I answer Him? Did not He that made me make him?"

And the plain truth as to the uselessness of "religion" while neglecting our responsibility to our fellows is thus put by another contributor to Holy Writ: "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; *if thou sayest, behold we knew it not*; doth not he that weigheth the heart consider it? and shall not He render to every man *according to his works*?"

7. THE SHEPHERDS.

Some may believe they see an element of hope in the fact that a few of our religious leaders appear to be waking up, and calling more attention to some obvious, though long neglected practical truths. Yet what does it amount to for the most part? Bishops and deans are striking attitudes, and talking very fiercely, but if by inadver-

tence they cause offence to people of any consequence, they immediately rush to apologize—to smooth the ruffled susceptibilities and declare that they did not say it, or did not mean it—and to protest that no one has more respect for the offended parties than they have. If these men really mean to come out on God's side and the people's, let them employ the best powers of their minds—for they are educated men—in trying to understand who are the real enemies of righteousness. And let them dissociate themselves from them and all their works, and so clear themselves from guilt—creating a hopeless breach, as Christ did—and *then* let them denounce the evils and the evildoers. And when the inevitable outcry arises, let them stand to their guns, and not run away. Let them be willing, like the apostles, to be counted vile for the Kingdom of God's sake. They have protested that they were in the war to their last shilling; let them venture themselves to their last shilling, and their last friend, in the war on behalf of the poor and the oppressed, and then we may believe in them.

"Where are you off to?" asked the writer of an acquaintance, whom he met prepared for a journey at the time of a general election. "I am just off to tell some good, thumping lies to the yokels of North Flatshire," was the reply. "They are a lot of — fools, and they'll take it all down like milk." This gentleman was a friend of the vicar of a town in North Flatshire, and used occasionally to read the lessons in his church. Can it be supposed that these reverend gentlemen do not know the game their friends are playing? Do they not know what they are aiding and abetting when they appear with them on their platforms, and hallow the proceedings with their presence? Or is it that they share the contempt of these men for the "yokels," and cynically regard the whole thing as part of the game?

We fear the latter is often the truer explanation. With many of the well-to-do, the maintenance of their traditional attitude of contempt for the poorer classes is practically a point of honour. It is, as the French would

say, *de rigueur*; and the clergy come from these classes, and too often share their sympathies and their antipathies. With many people there is no attempt to disguise this attitude; on the contrary, it is often the conscious "pose"; and it is amusing sometimes to notice the queer way in which these people will glance sharply at you, as though you were not "playing the game," if you champion the workers by any chance remark. The idea seems to be that you are no sportsman if you do not stand up for your own side—the "Haves," against the other side—the "Have-nots," who they seem to think are made of a different texture from themselves. There is a definite system of philosophy being taught to-day—naturally it comes from Germany—of which we shall speak later, which formally and openly adopts this attitude, and exults in the "noble ideal" of superior people considering only themselves and their class, and exploiting those beneath them. The people we have been speaking of may not be familiar with this system of "philosophy," but its spirit is in them. They have even a contempt for any man of their own class who really does sympathize with "the herd." Like the author of the philosophy in question, they "cannot breathe" in such an atmosphere; their lungs will only tolerate the "purer air" of class egoism.

All affectation apart, it is simply mean, sordid, greedy, cowardly, cruel, to despise and exploit those less fortunate than ourselves. There is nothing clever, and nothing brilliant about it—nothing exhilarating to a decent mind. You are not even a splendid sinner, my friend. It used to be considered that the lowest down a man could get was to "steal a child's treacle crust." But this is your sin, my gallant gentlemen. And this is *your* sin, too, Reverend, and Right Reverend, and Very Reverend Sirs, for you have made yourselves parties to the deeds of your friends, aiding and abetting, till a vast proportion of the common folk, on the showing of some of your own number, have come to regard you as their natural enemies. And most of those who do not so regard you at least show

by their attitude that they have no use for you; they care no more for you than you do for them; they ignore you, or regard you with that contempt which is more deadly to your pretensions than hatred.

And there is something worse than the judgment of the people for you to face. There is a just God in Heaven. And in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel—which doubtless you have preached from—you will notice that the Judge pays no regard to the garb in which those before Him are clad, but only to what they have *done*—done to the poor—done “unto Me.”

Think what you might have been, and what you might have done, if you had only had the love of God in your hearts, and had loathed snobbery as Christ loathed it! The people will respond to a man who really cares for them; but, if you do not care for them in your very bones, all your attempts to appear as though you did will only make you look pitiable. A soldier friend writes me, “Think if all the religious bodies you know were really converted, and full of zeal for God! What could withstand them? Dear old Mr. C. (their chaplain) came to us when we needed him most. He risked his body, and what is more, his soul I sometimes feel, *for our sakes*, for he told me he found it hard to stand some of the things he met with and had to undergo at the front. He was brave and fearless; but what is more, his heart burned with love to God. What was the result of this man's God-given service? He could always get a boy's confidence. I never heard a word against him. If the boys wanted anything they went to Parson C. Never was there a word against his uprightness and integrity; and while, with all their fag-giving and stomach-cramming arrangements, the other fellows could only get a small crowd, he would always get a good following. And why? Because we got to know *he meant what he said*. It doesn't take long out yonder to find out what a man is worth. War and its terrors have a quick way of pulling the mask off. Many men are waiting to listen to the things of God, but it must be through sincere

channels. Of course there are some folk nothing seems to touch, but how long have they been fleeced and taught to expect nothing but hardness from those who should help ? ”

It is admitted by some of the “padres” returned from the front that the majority of them are not taken seriously by the majority of the men. This is made quite clear by the Rev. A. Herbert Gray, in his book, *As Tommy Sees Us*, and is confirmed by others. The present writer has no first-hand knowledge of “Tommy” at the front, but he knows “Tommy” at home. And many of the sage observations offered to us about “Tommy,” not only by returned chaplains, but by the large number of ministers who have obtained three months’ leave from their pastoral charges in order to go to the front and “study Tommy,” seem distressingly inept and irrelevant, and many an intelligent soldier is seriously offended by them. For the fact is, “Tommy” is a being who has no real existence except as a temporary phenomenon. “Tommy” is a clerk, a carpenter, a navvy; a policeman or a postman; a shopkeeper or shop assistant; a coster, a hooligan or a student; he is my gardener or my employer; my next-door neighbour—or the minister’s next-door neighbour; he is my son or yours—he is you or me. Was it really necessary for so large a number of clerics to leave their duties, to make more work for those at home, to increase the strain on passport offices and train and boat services, and to throw on the Army authorities at the front the extra duty of looking after them, in order to go out and study “Tommy” under abnormal conditions when they might have been studying him under normal conditions all their lives, or to worry about his temporary problems though they never worried about the problems which beset him when he was at home, and will beset him again when he comes back? One would think they had discovered some new and strange animal, the recital of whose peculiar disposition and habits serves to furnish an interesting evening for the parishioners in

the local parish hall. We have his temperament and bearing described from various points of view, but most agree in describing him—probably with considerable truth—as a happy-go-lucky fellow, grouching, but cheerful; brave, but gentle; dirty, but happy; with a real reverence for the essentially divine somewhere deep down in his heart, but as a rule quietly contemptuous of the external offices of a conventional religion.

And now "Tommy" is coming home, they are going to modify their religious methods so far as possible in order to cater for this new being whom they have discovered—and they will find that *he no longer exists*. When the shop assistant, the policeman and our next-door neighbour are thrown together under campaigning conditions, they have the good sense to make the best of it and of each other. The mutual dependence, the open-air life, the training and physical well-being, the sense of a common interest and a common danger, and the absolute necessity of throwing off for the time all the ordinary preoccupations of life, combine to produce a certain temperament, and his clerical visitors come back and describe to us so much of that real temperament as "Tommy" allows to be seen—which is very little. We are presented with the picture with which we are so familiar of the devil-may-care Tommy blazing his own path to glory, and we all discuss how we shall best deal with this being when he returns, so as to secure him for the churches. But the returning "Tommy" will be remarkably like the forty million people now at home, very few of whom are "secured" by the churches. When things settle down he will have the same problems that he had before he went away. People talk as though we are to have a sudden irruption of several millions of men, physically sons of Anak, temperamentally akin to John Browdie, and with the habits of Vikings. But the returned "Tommy" will be a man with all the old preoccupations; he will not form a class by himself, and will not be separately recognizable. He will have family troubles, financial troubles, labour troubles, and

in the next labour dispute, as in the last, the fact that a percentage of the men who are "out" are returned soldiers will make no difference—unless ecclesiastics are prepared to reverse entirely their usual attitude and sympathies. He will sometimes be sick, or sour, or disappointed; sometimes he will be wicked—sometimes he will suffer from the wickedness of others. Let the parsons put themselves right with the forty-odd millions now at home, and they will be right for the million who are coming home. In a word, have the churches got a Christianity, and do they 'practise a Christianity, which will help ordinary men and women? If not, it is useless for them to hope to "secure Tommy." As well expect a shop-keeper to secure customers by flaming announcements of new business methods while he has an empty shop. They cannot "deliver the goods."

8. THE BLINDNESS.

If it be true that world events are shaping themselves—or being shaped—into a great conflict between good and evil, we must wake up to the fact that the two opposing forces are *essential* good, and *essential* evil. It is not simply a conflict between two schools of thought, or two systems. It is not—ultimately—between Prussian autocracy and Anglo-Saxon or Latin democracy, or even between militarism and the idea of a League of Nations. Much less is it a conflict merely between religiousness and irreligiousness, between parsons and people, or between the churches and the world. The line of righteousness cuts right through these lateral divisions and divides them vertically into good and evil, the two real opposing forces. The issues are confused to an extent that might cause us to despair. Professed religionaries may be found on the wrong side, and so-called worldly men, with the spirit of Christ in them, on the right. He who would be intelligently on this side must have his eyes "skinned" to discern between good and evil. He must refuse to be dazzled by glitter, or deafened by

clamour, or to take people and causes at their own valuation; he must, as Christ insisted, "not judge according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

Tremendous forces are at work to maintain and increase the present confusion. We have tried herein, and shall try, to throw a little light on one or two aspects of the conflict, but the real remedy is for all men of goodwill to think out the facts and the position fearlessly and conscientiously for themselves.

Many good men are not really thinking at all. Some have just a glimmering of a notion that only religion can save the world, and doubtless they are right so far; but what do they mean by religion? Among the churches it was admitted that things were wrong long before the war, and any time this last decade or two we have heard periodically from Free Church pulpits that we must "get back to Christ." At all the annual Assemblies and Conferences the same thing is brought out, often with great *éclat*, as though the speaker were announcing an original discovery, though he is repeating it for the *n*th time. But, again we ask, what do they mean?

What some speakers mean by this is probably just nothing at all. They have heard it, and think it sounds worth repeating—as it certainly is, for it happens to be true. But what some evidently have at the back of their minds is that we should get back to the religion of forty or fifty years ago. But this is not getting back to Christ; it is getting back to our grandmothers. This generation is not going to be saved by a re-hash of the sermons of the last—nothing sounds more unconvincing than an "old-fashioned sermon"—or by seeking to galvanize into life again methods that were "played out" long ago.

The men who are striving to reproduce the particular tone of preaching that was current in their conventicle when they were forty years younger are wasting their time. Whatever was good in the religion of past days, it arose from God speaking to our fathers with a message

for what was *then* "to-day." Men who had a message for that age were up to date with it, and did not work off on the people vain repetitions of the message of forty years earlier. And God has no use to-day except for men who are spiritually awake, who can hear His voice *now*; who are on the watch-tower, listening what the Lord their God shall say to them, and who will not fear to deliver the message.

But, with all that was good in the last generation, there was much that was not so good. Thirty to fifty years ago, religion got into a rut—and got stuck there—spite of subsequent changes in methods. Some of its most regrettable features became crystallized at that point, or at least the seeds were sown of much that we are suffering from to-day. A conventional idea of sin was evolved, that left untouched the real evil tendencies of the age. The typical "sinner" was a young man who had left the paternal roof, come up to London, ceased to attend divine service, learnt to play cards—and lose—and got into trouble generally, a literalizing and materializing of the parable of the Prodigal Son that was far from the mind of its Author. But the real Prodigal Son of St. Luke's Gospel is a man who wastes his *moral* and *spiritual* resources; it is infantile to interpret him merely as one who wastes his money and his worldly opportunities—that is not an interpretation at all. The real Prodigal Son is a self-seeking man, as were doubtless the tax-farmers whose presence gave occasion for the parable. He may even be a very astute man on the lower plane. He it is who turns his back on his Father's house, and despises his Father's fare; who, finding little satisfaction for his soul in the things for which he forsook God, is reduced to feeding himself on things which are no fit food for an immortal soul. He it is who seeks to fill his belly with hog-wash, or the husks fit only for swine. The poor wastrel who is the conventional, typical "sinner" often knows not how to fill his belly at all.

Doubtless many went through acute religious experiences as a result of the preaching of the particular truths

that were given more prominence to in the last generation. With many, it changed their lives, and set them on the right road; with many others, however, the only change is that they are now church members; while, with a still larger number, no results have followed at all, and they are trying hard to forget the incident. But, among the men who profess to have been influenced by such experiences, are some who have become "leading lights" in the religious world, and who are to-day the chief cause of "what is wrong with the churches," and of the contempt into which these have fallen in the eyes of so many decent people. A case occurs to the writer. The man was supposed to have been—and possibly was—rescued by evangelical effort from a very low-down life. Freed from the bondage of drink, his natural business acumen asserted itself, and he "got on." He seemed to have done a good thing for himself in getting "converted," though whether he had done such a good thing for those he had to do with is not so clear. It was twenty years later when the writer first came across him, and by then he had become the highly esteemed patron of a certain religious cause. One evening the writer was present at a money-raising function on behalf of the "cause" in question, held in a chapel which had been lent for the occasion, and at which this patron presided. No charge was to be made them for the use of the building, but they were to pay the caretakers half a crown for the extra work involved. The caretaker and his wife were receiving 12s. 6d. per week between them for the heavy work of the chapel, and eked out a scanty living with the aid of road-sweeping by the husband.

After the benediction, which followed the collection, our friend left the platform and came sailing down the aisle. I thought he had come to settle up with the caretaker, but the hand that he extended was empty! "Well, brother Tomkyns," he exclaimed in the hearing of everybody, and grasping and shaking the old man's hand effusively, "are you going to take your fee, or are you going to give it to the Lord?"

I never saw a man look more taken aback. The poor little chap seemed literally to turn sick. At last he muttered, turning wearily away, "I suppose I shall have to give it to the Lord." "God bless you, brother Tomkyns! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!" ejaculated the great man, nearly wringing the poor little fellow's arm off. And so the old boy got nothing, and was left to feel, perhaps, that "the Lord" had chiselled him out of his half-crown, and as likely as not to go short of that little bit of something hot for supper—so acceptable after being sodden all day at road-sweeping—which he had promised himself and his wife out of his overtime.

And it came to pass that the rich man died, and was buried, within a year or two of this incident—and his will was proved for £40,000.

We do not want to make too much of this individual case, or to press it to the point of defaming the memory of a man of whom we really knew very little, beyond what we saw and heard that night. Like a much more celebrated man than ourselves, we merely use it "as an illustration." Therefore our following remarks refer, not to the deceased gentleman, but to the general question. What on earth is the use of a man being saved even from the curse of drink, if in place of a drunkard we are to have a hard-fisted employer, a scheming exploiter of the affairs of the town in his own interests as builder, landlord or contractor; a manipulator of the local councils and committees against the interests of labour, and of the unfortunate victims of slumdom? The whole idea of what constitutes Christianity is in a state of chaos. Many are cultivating an esoteric "religion" in their solemn conventions, while those who care for the people are cursing them for their hardness and greed. We are largely teaching Pietism—a sterile religious sentimentalism—in lieu of piety. And Pietism is in fact being practised in some instances side by side with a virulent practical anti-Christianity, and *by the same people*.

Christ told the religious leaders of His day that the publicans and harlots would enter the Kingdom of Heaven

before them ; the religionists would weep with mortification, they would gnash their teeth with rage, to find themselves cast out, while those from afar would sit down to meat with the fathers of the faithful.

Now, what does this mean in plain twentieth-century English ? It means, if it means anything at all, that a large number of professional religionists will lose their immortal souls, and that a large number of "outsiders" will inherit the blessing. I know, says Christ, that you call Me "Lord, Lord." I know that you claim to have done many wonderful things in My name, but they were not "*the things that I say.*" Depart ; I never knew you.

We want fewer "Holiness Meetings," or else an equal number of Righteousness Meetings, Truth Meetings, and Common Honesty Meetings. And, while we are about it, we could do with some Common-Sense Meetings. A man may be guilty of all the things we have suggested, and no one in his church will dare to call in question his title to glory. But let it be known that he engages in a friendly hand of whist, for love, on a Saturday evening, or that, in a moment of righteous indignation, he so far forgot himself as to call a damned scoundrel a damned scoundrel, or that he has been seen digging the potatoes from his allotment on Sunday morning—when most of his fellow-members were snoring—and some dear old lady is sure to be seen shaking her head, and declaring that she is "not happy" about the brother's soul. One evil spirit may have gone out of a man, and seven devils more devilish than himself have taken the empty place in the man's heart and life, but if the latter does not happen to practise too openly the few sins which form the stock bugbears of the popular religious idea, his sanctity is never called in question. For the popular idea of sin is often leagues removed from Christ's idea, and it is difficult to understand how people got hold of it who have Bibles in their hands and have been taught to read.

9. HOLY DAYS, OR HOLY WAYS ?

We do not intend to inflict on our readers a doctrinal question, but another "illustration" may help to make our meaning clear.

Sabbath-keeping is never enjoined on Christians in the Bible. From beginning to end of the Christian revelation there is not one word in its favour. The only references we have to the Sabbath in the gospels are those frequently recurring cases where the Pharisees condemned Christ for Sabbath-breaking—and were called hypocrites by Him for their pains. The only references in the epistles are those where we are warned not to judge others, or allow others to judge us, in respect of holy days, or new moons, or Sabbath days.

We do not want to discuss the question whether the Jewish ordinance of the Sabbath, or of the new moons or other holy days, is binding or not on Christians. If many Christians believe that it is so binding, they do right to keep it, though we know not on what authority they alter a commandment of God, and change the seventh day of the week into the first. As already stated, however, it is precisely with reference to these secondary matters that we are expressly forbidden to judge others. Our object is a much more serious one; it is to show that religious circles are emphasizing quite other things than those that occupied the mind and teaching of Christ, that they are setting aside His commandments and substituting a commandment of ordinances which He did not teach.

The facts are simple, and beyond dispute. In no recorded word of Christ did He enjoin Sabbath observance; in the preaching of His followers it is never mentioned. Some of these preached largely to heathen, so that it cannot be pretended, as is said of the Jewish Christians, that they already knew about the Sabbath, and did not need telling. When controversies arose as to whether converted Gentiles ought not to become as Jews, the Jewish Church itself, with the apostles,

decided that they had no right to lay on them any such burden, insisting, however, that they should abstain from certain sins which, in their unconverted state, they had not looked upon as sins. Not a word was said of imposing Sabbath observance on them. So we may run through the whole range of the New Testament, and find no commandment such as that which seems to have become almost the greatest commandment of all in Nonconformist tradition and preaching.

We deal here only with the Nonconformist view, because we simply do not understand the state of mind of that Church which believes that Christians are commanded to observe the Sabbath, but can be absolved therefrom by the dispensation of a bishop. We must leave them to settle this with their bishop; though every one knows, or ought to know, that no man can absolve us from a commandment of God.

Of course there are—thank God—some splendid men in the pulpits, and we are indebted to them for some splendid messages. But the writer's experience over many years is that, when preachers or members of their congregations start talking about national sins, they nearly always instance, not the daily infractions of the great moral commandments which are rotting society through and through, but—"Sabbath-breaking." It is dangerous to venture on statistics, but we do not think we should be far wrong in suggesting that the references to this are equal in number to the references to all other sins put together.

What a state of things for this people which wants to "get back to Christ." How often He tells us we can only please Him by doing *the things He says*; yet that section of the professing Church which expressly professes to be guided by His recorded words, and to reject all traditional authority, has continually on its lips a thing He *never* said, and has made it almost a test of a man's Christianity. Think of it! Not one recorded word by Christ enjoining Sabbath observance, not one word in the proclamation of the Evangel to the world by His

followers, not one word in all the epistles of instruction in righteousness and doctrine to the infant Churches of Asia and Europe, yet a hundred thousand words every Sunday from the pulpits and in the Sunday-school classes of Christendom. To say the least, how utterly out of touch we must be with Christ.

Now what does all this indicate? If due emphasis were laid on the ethical matters which Christ insisted on, we should not interfere with those who magnify this ordinance. It would be merely a supererogatory work. But the case seems to be one, not of supererogation, but of substitution. It rather seems that the ethical teachings of Christ are largely set aside, and that this other thing has been put in their place. Ethically, we are preaching, not what He preached, but "another gospel." May it not be that there is a lurking suspicion at the hearts of many in our churches that, in the practical things of life, there is not much to distinguish them favourably from the world? May it not be that it has been found necessary to create an artificial difference, and so this ordinance of the Sabbath has been taken over and magnified, so that there may be something in which they shall seem better than the world—something they do which the world does not? An ordinance is so much easier to keep than a moral commandment; the latter often costs more than they are willing to pay; they want to enjoy all the blessings and promises of the gospel at a peppercorn rent. But if an ordinance is observed so as to atone for remissness in the weightier matters of the law—justice, mercy, and the love of God—then the ordinance has become merely one of those "righteousnesses" which are as "filthy rags." If our Sabbath observance is the chief thing that distinguishes us from "the unrighteous," then we probably belong to this latter class ourselves; for, except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, we shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

If they *must* put us under the law of Moses, instead of teaching the commandments of Christ, why do they

seize on the one commandment which concerns an ordinance? Are not the other commandments being broken every day? Christendom is reeking with theft, murder, adultery, false witness, coveting, the worship of false gods, and the solemn taking of God's name in vain, yet the constant burden of their refrain is "Sabbath observance."

And what an "observance" it is! What a day Sunday is! Many good mothers declare it is the hardest day of the week for them. The children get a hot dinner that day (though a fire was not to be lit on the Sabbath). They have to be got ready for Sunday-school; and many a mother, after washing up the dinner things, will rush to get the children off, and then tidy up and get herself ready to be at school in time to take her own class. God bless her, and her children too! Only let her not think that this toilsome—if happy—day bears any resemblance to Sabbath-keeping, with its "no manner of work." And let her not lift up her hands in horror at those who may do some slightly different kind of work. It is objected against the Jews that they hedged round the Sabbath with all sorts of stipulations of their own invention as to what was lawful and what was unlawful on that day; but we have done precisely the same thing. One of the "traditions" of the Talmud is to the effect that to put the hand through the door or window to give to a beggar was "work" within the meaning of the commandment, but that to place a gift in a beggar's hand which was thrust into the room was blameless. This is not very dissimilar from *our* tradition, that outdoor work is Sabbath-breaking, while indoor work of certain kinds is not; to dig potatoes is work, but to peel or boil them is not. A member of the congregation will apologize for his wife's absence, as she was "too busy to come," and the preacher will sympathize, for *his* wife is absent from the same cause; and he will put a word in his prayer for "those detained by home duties." Then in his address he will lament "national sins," and the first point in the indictment will be "Sabbath-

breaking." He will tell how he saw men on their allotments, cutting the greens for dinner, and will suggest that this is one of the sins for which God is judging us. And the last sight his eyes rested upon before he left home was his own wife cutting and preparing greens for the pot!

Possibly one at least of the sins for which God is judging us is hypocrisy.

By the common consent of the early Christians, and doubtless by a divine intuition, the first day of the week was set apart for worship and service. The writer seldom fails to thank God from his very heart, at least once a week, for His providential grace in preserving this priceless boon to us, one of the greatest of His mercies. But an idea of legality has been attached to it by the invention of man, whereby those who "observe" it—after such sort as we have shown—impute to themselves a spurious righteousness, and condemn others whose activities differ somewhat from their own. They "do" this, instead of doing *the things He says*. Let us rather gratefully and humbly receive this day as God's merciful gift; it is not something we give to God, but something which He gives to us—not a work of righteousness on our part, but an act of grace on His. May we show our gratitude by making good use of it, rendering to Him what is His, for it is *the Lord's day*.

10. VOICES IN THE NIGHT.

We have allowed ourselves to touch here at some length on the religious question, which we had intended to reserve for a later chapter. But this could hardly be avoided. In considering "the light that is darkness" it was inevitable that "religion"—the one thing to which we ought to be able to turn for light in the present intolerable obscurity—should come into the survey.

But the same obscurity exists everywhere; in politics, journalism, literature; in almost everything that sets out to show us the way in which we should walk. We

look for light—and behold darkness. Darkness thick and palpable. Darkness which invades not only our eyes, but our minds, our hearts, our whole being. A moral and intellectual darkness which has settled down upon us, in which we struggle blindly, madly, vainly; from which there seems no way of escape. Yet, all the while, the true light is shining—clear, serene, cleansing, purifying—a light which, once we admit it, we shall *know* to be the true light, for it is the Light of the World—the Sun of Righteousness. Heavy is the penalty man has paid for shutting his eyes against *that* Light; fatal the folly with which he allows himself to be dazzled and bewildered by the false flares flung before his eyes—whose only light is the lurid light of hell.

We have only space to indicate briefly a few of the things wherein the age deceives itself, and allows itself to be deceived. We can give but hints, which the reader may follow up for himself.

What a shameful travesty of the genuine article is the vulgar shoddy exploited under the name of “patriotism.” We should be wise, every time we hear this word, to remember Dr. Johnson, and *to look for the scoundrel*. If a man only mouths this word, and plays up to that section of the press which so largely controls us, there are few crimes he may not commit—and *commit in the limelight*—with impunity. Treason, rebellion, gun-running, trucking with Germany, seducing the Army from its allegiance; none of these—or even the “crime” of being of German extraction—will prevent his being elevated to one of the highest seats in the land, while the life of Britain and the fate of the world are at stake. But let a man truly love his country—

Oh, my God! That a man, *to-day*, can let *anything*—coveteousness, passion, life itself—stand before ENGLAND, the land for which our fathers died, and for which, now, our sons have so freely shed their blood. If I forget thee, O England, let my right hand forget her cunning; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I prefer not thee above my chief joy!

Let a man truly love his country—let him love it so purely that he scorns to exploit the sacred word patriotism—as he would scorn to exploit his wife's virtue—let him refuse to bow down to journalists who are the people's enemies, and these will see to it that he suffers for his country. They will discover that his great-grandfather was said to be distantly connected by marriage to some one related to a German; they will accuse him of unnameable practices on the authority of an alleged but invisible book, said to be compiled by the truthful German himself, but seen only by a Pemberton-Billing and his exclusive circle of acquaintances. Or—easier than all—they will call him names, which is often even more effective. In any case, he will find it a greater crime to be innocent than to be guilty.

Befooled as they are, the people will not listen to any defence; facts only make them more mad. They would think it a weakness to allow the accused to open his mouth in his own vindication. He may be their truest friend and champion; left alone to do his work he might have been the saviour of his country; but the "stunt-hound" has his fangs in him, and he has got to go under. And the people who will not hear a word from him will put up with anything from their real enemies. They not only suffer fools gladly—they suffer rogues with equal cheerfulness. The Apostle Paul was familiar with this phenomenon. I have made myself as nothing, he says, and have never taken a penny for all I have done for you; and I seem to have committed an offence in so doing. You cannot suffer me, but you suffer fools gladly. And you suffer it, if a man brings you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalts *himself*, and smites *you* on the face.

This was in the second Epistle to the Corinthians; we should like to re-address it as an Epistle to the British.

Yet the people listen to these voices. Though their very blatancy should expose their true nature; though no pot-house drunkard, wallowing among the sawdust and spittoons on a tap-room floor, ever spewed up such

filth as these men belch forth in the name of Patriotism, the people have surrendered the right and duty of private judgment, and swallow this foul vomit as if it were the finest ambrosia.

The darkness is not yet absolute—though that may come. There are yet voices raised to guide us, but they are too often drowned by the voices which lead us farther astray. Few organs of public opinion which are to be trusted catch the popular fancy. The people are like the crowd at one of those travelling fairs which pitch on a vacant piece of land, and make night hideous with their blare and glare. They gather round the showman who has the most strident voice, where the big drum booms loudest, and the naphtha lamps flare most luridly. This saves their dull lives from boredom by keeping their minds gently titillated, without imposing on them the trouble of ever really thinking.

Yet even with the thoughtless crowd there is an elementary instinct of justice at bottom; a rough—though untutored—hatred of fraud and chicanery. But this instinct is exploited and traded on by those who are not out to help the people, but to get rich. A man with a record which might vie with that of Barabbas sets up as the people's counsellor and guide. He stirs up that honest, but crude, sentiment against any one whom he wants to clear out of his path. He manipulates his readers like so many marionettes, swaying them this way and that at his will, making them dance to any tune he pipes. He creates an artificial fog, compared with which the achievements of the late Commander Brock look puny—and then coolly remarks that where there is smoke there must be fire. Or he speaks of his victims as of convicted felons, and his readers assume that the accused have been proved guilty, and fail to notice that he has omitted the trifling formality of furnishing evidence.

If the people are his pliant dupes, it is their own fault. Let them inquire into *facts*, and into the antecedents and character of their mentor. Let them learn to *think*. Hateful as it is to so many to do this, yet there is no

other way. We must *take trouble*; we must exercise and develop the God-given faculty of reason, or go straight on to destruction, the doom of the fool.

We should like to enter a protest against a certain muddled sentiment that usually passes for a virtue. We refer to what is often called "Christian charity." This expression is employed with two entirely different meanings. Very often it is used to mean just what it says, i.e. Christian love—kindness, pity, helpfulness, generosity, etc. It is not likely that we are going to find fault with that.

But the expression is often made to do duty for something quite different. People who refuse to bestir themselves to put a stop to any evil that is going on often plead "Christian charity" towards the wrong-doer, by which they mean, presumably, a benevolence of judgment towards him, and a desire to believe the best of a man, and not to attribute bad motives.

Now it is undoubtedly true that Christ condemned a habit of censoriousness, and far be it from us to seek to weaken His commandment. But, as against His once employed expression "Judge not," we have His commandment, on several occasions, to exercise our judgments, and to exercise them rightly; and there is no difficulty in distinguishing between the respective applications of these various instructions. We are commanded to judge righteous judgment, to judge men by their works—and *not by their professions*—to judge between good and evil, to judge the sermons we hear, to judge people's doctrines and their practices. The point ought not to need arguing. Christ never preached nonsense, and to surrender the faculty of judgment would be to reduce life to an absurdity, and to give up that which raises man above the beasts. If we did not exercise the faculty of judgment there would have been no war—it is true—but there certainly could be no peace.

The spurious "Christian charity" which ignores all

these commandments is made an excuse for not coming to the rescue, whatever villainy may be afoot. It is more often exercised in favour of the rich or powerful, and, even in such cases, if no good could be done by interfering we should not complain of inaction. We certainly do not recommend any one to go round interfering generally, or attributing bad motives. But, as a rule, when evil is being done, *some one is suffering*; where there is a criminal there is usually a victim; and the essence of practical Christianity is that we should venture ourselves on behalf of the victim. Even here again we must judge whether it is a case for our interference. You may think a man is not very kind to his wife, but we do not suppose any reader of these pages is foolish enough to interfere in such a case; and there are plenty of other instances where we must leave people to settle their own affairs. But you may see a man chasing his wife with a hatchet, which is a very different matter. Yet, if we followed to its logical conclusion some people's idea of "Christian charity," we should do nothing to save her. "I never interfere," we should say, as the woman rushes shrieking by. "I know nothing about the matter. I have no right to judge a man's motives or intentions. I see him brandish his hatchet, but very likely he only means to tickle her with it." Of course we have carried our illustration to the *reductio ad absurdum*, but it serves to show how absurd or dishonest the principle itself is. Evils that we know of are often going on unchecked where it is our duty to interfere. A man whose character is most seriously in question is engaged in activities where, if he be not pure, he may be doing unspeakable harm—harm which we might stop. We need not waste space in instancing cases where the principle applies; they are legion. And instances are legion, too, where this spurious "Christian charity" is made the excuse for allowing the villain to go scot free, and to continue his villainies. In the presence of a most serious question of this description, which had necessitated the calling of a meeting to discuss the matter, a man got up and repeated the

old tag about there being "so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it ill becomes the best of us to find fault with the rest of us." And that was his contribution towards the discussion.

It is not Christian charity; it is apathy, cowardice, self-interest or some other very un-Christian motive, which often leads us, not only "not to judge," but to afford the wrong-doer our countenance and support. Yet in such cases God holds us not only negatively but positively responsible for the evil that is wrought, for he that biddeth him "God speed" is a partaker of his evil deeds.

If we see evil coming on a man or on a city, and sound not the alarm, their blood will God require at our hands.

11. A VOICE, AND A REPLY.

Voices of a very different tone to those already referred to may be heard to-day, voices of men who are sincerely endeavouring to help us, and some of whom doubtless are helping us.

Among such sincere voices may be heard from time to time that of the Rev. E. A. Burroughs, Canon of Peterborough and Honorary Chaplain to the King. His principal message is in his book *The Valley of Decision*, of which we have the edition published in December 1917. We fear, however, that, notwithstanding his sincerity, Canon Burroughs has not got the rights of the matter. If he has, *we* most certainly have not, and it will be a good thing if *In Darkest Christendom* never emerges from the hands of the printer.

We would ask the reader's careful consideration of the following extracts from the above book as an indication of the ideas of Canon Burroughs on questions of practical righteousness:

(Page 151.) "The heedlessly liberal scale of the separation allowances has made many women wealthy and idle who have never been anything but industrious and poor. 'Eighteen shillings a week, and no husband?

Why, it's heaven !' And 'heaven' for such people is too often hard by the public-house."

(Page 129, quoting from an Indian Bishop.) "The large separation allowances have made many soldiers' wives able to be idle who have never been idle before. The shortage of meat . . . is caused quite as much by many people eating meat who have never afforded it before, as by the gigantic quantities consumed or wasted in the camps."

(Pages 154-5, quoting from *The Times* of May 1, 1915.) "When our army in the Ypres salient was being pulverized with high explosive and flooded with poison gas, while our own artillery stood almost silent behind them for the lack of shells, . . . the large stores in London and wine merchants in every district had to deal with an extraordinary rush of orders for spirits from customers anxious to make purchases before the prices were raised. . . . The desire of many customers seemed to be to secure a sufficient supply to last them through the period of the war. At one establishment an order was taken from a single purchaser for seventy-two gallons of whisky, and demands for ten and even twenty dozen bottles seem to have been common. . . . The phrase 'inundated with orders' is used by the salesmen at every important store in the London area."

(Pages 237-8.) "If we decide for materialism—which we shall do by not deciding for Christ— . . . the old problems, which the war has shelved, will come back upon us, with a swarm of new ones in their train. Money will, for most, be scarce, and taxation ruinous; and the Nemesis upon all the present squandering by the 'temporary rich' will fall not so much on themselves as on the community. Those elements of the population for which the war has been a training in new self-indulgence will not readily accept *the inevitable return* to the 'status quo ante,' from (say) £5 a week to 30s., and will form a centre of unrest which, *though deserving little sympathy*, may *extort* concessions." (The italics are our own.)

(Page 110.) "It only requires enough money and

enough labour to 'raise the roofs of the houses,' while it needs inspiration and sacrifice and a belief in God to 'raise the souls of the citizens.' And so we took the easier course—and the wrong one."

(Pages 8-9.) "We cannot be too grateful for Mr. Lloyd George's 'idealistic revival.' . . . But we also cannot forget that it is a case of being healed by a hair of the dog that bit us. And the unerring irony of history has decreed that the Minister's prophetic gift should have to spend itself in conflict with precisely those elements of materialism and *self-assertion*" (our italics) "in the working classes which his own earlier oratory did so much to encourage."

(Page 117.) "As to the sins of the minority being charged to the nation, so they must be, so long as the majority does not disown or coerce the offenders. . . . The Irish Nationalists, for instance, will have none of our economies, will not have a tax on their spirits, will not come under any of our recruiting schemes. It is monstrous, and we think so, especially after the events of last Easter week. But we have had to submit, and shall apparently have to submit still further, *at whatever cost of offending Ulster. But England knows that Ulster will never turn against her*"; (our italics) "therefore Ulster can be disregarded."

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Here we have it—the poor always wrong; and the sinned-against and the oppressed always wrong; while those who have friends among the powerful classes seem seldom to be wrong, even in the face of notorious facts to the contrary. To deal with the last quotation first, what grounds has England for "knowing" that Ulster will "never turn against her"? Who has ever turned against her like Ulster? Who but Ulster conspired with Germany to obtain guns and munitions to be turned against England, which they hold to this day, and which the British Government dare not take from them for fear of, "offending" Ulster? Who declared that they

would welcome the aid of the Kaiser against England? Who was it that treasonably conspired with British officers to seduce the Army from its allegiance to the King? Who set the example in Ireland of illicit arming and drilling? Who is it that has been persistently hard, selfish, stubborn, cruel, vindictive, against the majority of their own countrymen? And who, throughout the long agony of the war, has persistently opposed and thwarted every effort on the part of the British Government to heal the wounds of Ireland, and to set free for the war the enormous garrisons that are maintained there to this day?

The explanation of the perverted sympathies, and the extraordinarily distorted view of the facts, entertained by Canon Burroughs is, we fear, only too simple. The "Ulster" that he refers to—the only "Ulster" that there is any danger of "offending"—is that half, or little more than half, of Ulster which is akin in its political and religious sympathies to the powerful classes in this country—the Ulster which is "on the side of the nobs." He wants the majority to *coerce* the minority; but, if the majority in Ireland had been allowed to do that, the "Ulster" of Canon Burroughs would have been put in its place long ago. The idea seems to underlie the Canon's views that the less fortunate classes should everywhere submit to the terms and conditions which the classes who enjoy his sympathies might be willing to accord to them, and then all would be well.

And what would those terms and conditions be? What amount, for instance, would Canon Burroughs allow to the wife and child of the man away fighting for us, if eighteen shillings a week is too much? "It's heaven!" When the Canon gets to heaven he will expect to find it an improvement on the sort of life that can be lived here on that sum, with a child to keep. If he thinks otherwise, let him try it now; let him start a little "heaven on earth" for himself by living on what is left out of eighteen shillings a week after providing for a child out of it. He would not be tempted to many

wild extravagances ; he would not eat " too much meat," after paying rent and other household expenses. Neither would there be the slightest danger of his being tempted into habits of intemperance. He represents these " heedlessly liberal " allowances as the cause of the drinking which undoubtedly exists among certain of the working classes, as it exists among other classes. Has he *no* idea of what the lives of the majority of soldiers' wives are like—of the breaking up of homes, of the " going home to mother's," of the living with friends in order to economize by co-operation, or of the saving and contriving to manage to keep the old home going for the children's sake, on half the usual money ? Does he realize what sort of " heaven " it is for most of them to have their husbands away, facing death every day ? And if husband and wife are ever to be reunited, and to strive together to bring up their children as decent citizens, does he really mean to ask them to do it on 30s. a week ? He wants the nation to " return to God." Can he expect people to turn to a God—if there were such a God—who approves of these things ? I, too, want the nation to return to God, but if the Canon's idea is that all these iniquities are to continue, then, for the life of me, I cannot understand what he means by returning to God. Canon Burroughs plainly has a sincere desire to see the nation more pious, God-fearing, sober, chaste and honest than in the past ; but surely if this desirable state of things comes about it will issue in our doing justice by the workers, in our removing the prospect of the workhouse in old age, in our " raising the roofs of their houses "—or, better still, clearing them away and building decent ones, and in our doing all, and more than all, that Mr. Lloyd George ever taught these " self-assertive " working classes to hope for. Mr. Lloyd George's campaign was not a " materialistic " one ; it is not materialism to dispense our material things in doing justice by the poor ; materialism consists in *withholding* these things, in letting the poor live how they can while we stick to what we have, and ever strive to get more

so that—if our tastes lie in that direction—we may still buy our whiskies by the ten and twenty dozen; for, although the Canon calls attention to the selfish indulgence in drink of the wealthier classes, he does not propose to reduce *their* incomes.

A world in which these injustices are allowed to continue will not be the new world that Canon Burroughs wants to see; it will be the same old wicked world back again.

12. A DANGER OF THE DARK.

A danger to our liberties of the gravest character looms ahead—the coming onslaught by the Church of Rome. Whether we perceive this or not, it is imminent, and its success may well be the first big step downward into the final darkness. Against this menace our present resources afford no security. Mere “Anti-Romanism” will not save us. The Papacy will not stop to argue with the Protestant League; it will adopt a very different line of advance. The present state of the Protestant countries renders us vulnerable at almost every point, and we have little to oppose to the attack.

We shall not be saved by heroics. We shall not be saved by protesting from platform and pulpit that we are willing to shed our last drop of blood for the “principles of the Reformation.” They do not want our blood—at present—they want power; and we may yet see our champions proclaiming their readiness for the blood-shedding, and yet standing pitifully helpless, and looking a little ridiculous, while the work of “conversion” goes on merrily all around them.

Think how this sort of thing is worked nowadays, and do not prepare for battle on the lines of fifteenth-century strategy. When the attack begins in earnest, an alarm will doubtless be raised in the churches, and the cry will go forth to stand as a “solid phalanx.” But solid phalanxes are no good against high explosives, neither will cross-bows and tin-plate armour avail against poison gas. While we march bravely forward, the position will

be turned *in the rear*. The principal attack will not be directed against the churches, it will be made on *the people*. Some of these, although they have no definite religion, will be proof against the onslaught; they will be saved by the integrity of their characters, their democratic principles and their hatred of mental and spiritual fetters. But an enormous proportion have no definite convictions, or even traditions, to be overcome, and these will be at the mercy of a movement engineered by astute men, who know how to suit the method of attack to the requirements of the situation.

Already the ground is being prepared. We are furnished with unconsciously inspired accounts of the heroism of Roman Catholic priests and sisters in France. Doubtless these have done their duty as nobly as other Frenchmen and Frenchwomen, but that does not make us kindly disposed towards priestly rule. Our readers should study the results of such rule in the past, and the condition of South America in our own day, where priestly power has been stronger than the secular power, with results which are unimaginable to one who has not examined the facts.

We are favoured with little paragraphs in our newspapers, telling us how much more sincere the Roman Catholics are in their religion than the Protestants. But this only means that they are more regular in their *religious observances*; and we have been at some pains to show that this is an entirely different matter from the practice of Christian virtues.

The grand attack will be made by insidious methods such as those by which other recent campaigns have been waged, such as the Militarist and Protectionist campaigns, the Clerical campaign, and the general anti-social propaganda referred to in our earlier pages. The methods exposed there will be exploited tenfold more frantically, till we wake up one morning to find that the Roman Catholic religion is "all the go." Millions who have given no real thought to the matter will discover that it is the "correct thing," and, as they will tell you,

they "may as well be out of the world as out of the fashion." The Yellow Press, with its ear to the ground, may simply follow the popular trend. But it is more than possible that it will *lead*. Let that press once make up its mind to it, and make the thing a gigantic "stunt," with the people at its mercy as they are at present, and the thing is done. In such a case, what will be the use of our religious leaders blustering about principles of the Reformation, if there is no reformation in the hearts of the people? We can no more be saved by the faith of our fathers than we can be fed by the dinners of our fathers.

The women will be the first to fall. Whether the fashion be to wear yellow stockings—or none at all—or to attend matins, multitudes of them will follow it without thought or question. And having secured the mothers, the priests will be sure of the children—and the rest will follow.

Against such a campaign, what have we to oppose?

In the religious sphere, we have an impotent and almost irrelevant Kensitism. We cast no aspersion on the Kensitites; but fuming and foaming against the advancing hordes of the Papacy will have no more effect than fuming and foaming on the sea-shore against the waves of the advancing tide.

In the political sphere, we have a guilty Ulsterism, with its damning record of crime and treason written all over its face. If we are on the side of the right, we can only ruin our own cause by accepting such an ally or champion.

The only sure defence is to get into our own hearts and lives, and into the hearts and lives of the people generally, principles and practices which are the opposite of the things we hate and dread in Popery. This done, you need scarcely even warn the people against Popish machinations. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me," said Christ; and when the enemy comes to *us* he will find nothing in us to work on if we have purged ourselves of the follies and weaknesses

which make us at present the prey of any astute and designing foe.

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To sum up, we believe that the thoughtful man, who will look with fearless eyes on *the facts*, must confess that the experience of the war has so far not taught us wisdom. It has not resulted in the revealing of the truth, or the unveiling of error. It can hardly be gainsaid that, as a nation and as a race, we have learnt *nothing*, and less than nothing, from the war, in the things that matter. Millions of precious lives sacrificed, twenty thousand million pounds gone, the light and joy of life blotted out from incalculable millions of hearts and homes; and the result? Europe saved—for the present—from subjugation to the Prussian autocracy; but, in the moral and spiritual realm, the triumph of Germanism, an increased materialism and callosity of heart and intelligence, coupled with an entirely unwarranted assumption that we are going to be better than before the war.

“Never again!” we declare. But we are doing little so far, to ensure that our children shall never reap such a harvest as we have reaped. We are like a man who covers up thistles with a thin layer of earth, instead of burning them. “Never again,” he says, as he surveys the tidy surface, “never again shall these weeds plague me.” And the forces of nature operate as usual, and ere long his own *and his neighbours’* thistle-choked lands bear witness to his folly.

Yet we are told that our hope is in the rising generation. What a sad, if involuntary, confession of failure! New methods of education are to make the children better and wiser than their fathers. But until we know what is right we cannot teach our children right. And even if we could, these watchful little imitators will do, not what we “teach” them, but what we *do*. We must teach *ourselves* first.

IV

THE WATCH-DOGS

1. HOW THEY WATCH.

THE modern press has been given the name, by itself or by others, of "the watch-dogs of society." How have these watch-dogs fulfilled their function?

The strictures which we may find it our duty to pass on the press in this chapter are not made with a view to suggesting that restrictions should be imposed on its freedom. The fruits of secrecy and darkness are so fatal, that there can be no manner of doubt that a free press, such as we had before the Defence of the Realm Act came into force, is to be preferred to a government-controlled press, usually the mere tool of the party and the interests in power for the moment. In the last resort, a free press can be controlled by *the people*, if only the people will have the sense to exercise their powers.

It cannot be pretended that we have had all the help from the press that it would have been reasonable to expect. Among these "watch-dogs" are some treacherous hounds, who make friends with the wolf, or even themselves turn to harrying the flock which they should guard. Others probably have merely been too drowsy, too stupid, or too busy feeding, to raise an alarm, while some appear to have been bribed by bones to keep quiet when the robber came.

In a much advertised course of journalism, the embryo journalist is taught that he must not write for the expression of his convictions, unless, indeed, those convictions happen to be both popular and amusing. The reading

public, he is told, does not want to be instructed; it does not want to be made to think, it does not want to be made better; it wants to be amused, to be thrilled, to be made to laugh. Therefore he is expressly urged to devote his talents to these ends, and to put aside his ideals, and his hopes of making the world any better. This counsel is still being sent forth, and well charged for, after years of war, when it might be thought that there was some room for attempting to amend a world broken and blasted by its horrors. The student who has some qualms about accepting this sinister advice is reassured by being told that, of course, he can always "retain a margin for the ideal"; in the same way, it may be assumed, as some of the journals which are conducted on these lines retain a half-column in their issues for some sentimental snippet of a sermon.

Great pains are taken, too, to impress on the budding scribe the fact that he *must not* write anything which might tend to clash with the interests of newspaper advertisers. This instruction is absolute. No matter what the writer may happen to know about advertisements that are drawing millions of pounds out of the pockets of the public. Newspapers, he is told, live by their advertisements; therefore anything, however good, or however necessary to be told to the public, is condemned already if it is likely to offend the susceptibilities of advertisers. They have paid good money for the monopoly of telling the public something else, whether true or not, and anything which would spoil their story is predestined to the waste-paper basket.

We are disposed to believe that there are more than one or two papers, taking the country through, of which this statement is not entirely true; but so far as we can judge, as a rule it is fairly correct. The horror is not merely that our newspaper offices as a whole should have become so many "tied-houses," if that is indeed the case, but that the situation should be accepted with such equanimity, as one which we must not attempt to alter. For among the abuses which have to be put

down if ever the world is to become decent, advertising abuses are some of the most flagrant and injurious. But editors are not free, we are told; the masters feed the pack, and can bring them to heel at any moment with a crack of the whip.

From being silent when they should give tongue, to barking to order, is but a step, and many newspapers have taken this further step. Under the guise of news, or of advice to readers, an immense amount of covert advertising can be unearthed by a careful search of the columns of the secular and religious press. The investigator will be astounded at the heartless manner in which such papers betray the public interests which they are supposed to guard. And there are newspapers which appear to be interested in some of the matters puffed in their advertisement columns. In such cases, the only safe course is to ignore everything the journal says on the subject which it is endeavouring to boom. "Dumb dogs" with regard to ordinary advertisements, in these latter cases which we have instanced the faithful animals will bay for weeks together, but it is not on their readers' behalf that they raise such a noise. We have in mind one particular instance of a most widespread and far-reaching campaign of this description, which has steadily increased in intensity during the last three or four years.

Of course we know the answer that will be given. It is "business," and "every one does it." But if by that is meant that it is needless or useless to attempt to alter it, then we can only say you will never stop any of the abuses that are rotting us to the bone. So long as we use the term "business" to cover every form of money-making short of embezzlement, and so long as the conscience of the community *allows* money to exercise this pernicious power, so long will that power also be used for the furtherance of other objects whose evil effects are perhaps more apparent, but probably in the long run not more fatal.

And so long will the old world go on in the bad old way.

The new world we are looking for will turn out to be the old world after all, with the old sores, the old deceits and cheatings, the old tragedies and calamities, the old failure ever to realize the "good time" we have promised ourselves for so long, and for which our hearts are aching.

There are many ways in which our newspapers might have served us better by giving us warning of approaching dangers. The ordinary man is largely dependent on the newspaper to keep him informed of the tendencies of the times. It is a pity that our more reputable journals, at any rate, have not taken a larger and more generous view of their duties in this respect. It might be urged that some papers, at least, warned us of the danger from Germany. We have touched upon this point in our first chapter, and will only remark here that these are the papers that have contributed most towards making the world one in which the German outrage was possible. They have talked about a menace from every country in turn, and if they had had their way we might have been at war successively with Russia, America, and France. The only foreign country which we remember them puffing up during the decade or two before the war is Germany, and the only monarch whom they went out of their way to flatter, with the exception perhaps of the Czar of Russia, was the German Kaiser.

As guardians of the public weal, our journalists generally seem to have had an erroneous conception of their function. They have been quick to warn us of any real or fancied danger to our supposed material interests, but they have largely ignored the fact that the real interest of the people is in the moral state of the world. Hardly a week has passed without one of these watchful animals emitting a bark, sometimes to subside with a muttered growl, at others to be followed by a yelping of the whole pack. Some one had designs on India—some one was trespassing on our sphere of influence in Persia—our trade with China was being captured! Thieves were about! England must wake up! O fools, and worse than fools! this was not saving us from danger, but

creating the danger. It was not helping towards a better state of things in which we might live in peace and amity. On the contrary, it sought to perpetuate and aggravate a situation that was already a disgrace to Christendom; it tended to keep the minds of the people fixed on the wrong things, and to incite them to quarrel over them. It perpetuated the monstrous error that "possessions," trafficking, gain, were the real end of man, and that for the sake of these things it was worth while to lose our souls. It kept the nations permanently in a state of mutual covetousness and suspicion, with the constant risk of these breaking out into active hostilities. Yet even from the material point of view they should have known that the resort to arms that many of them were daily courting would cost us a thousandfold of the material interests supposed to be in jeopardy, while the suffering and misery of even the smallest war represent a loss which is incalculable.

This is why it would have been more useful to warn us of *tendencies*—and to teach us to beware of our own. The superficial can get excited every morning over every fresh scare. They find these papers exciting, but to the man who uses his brains to think, they are deadly dull. He finds it impossible to work up an interest in every fresh detail of the everlasting snarl. How can he? He knows that if to-day's "incident" is settled there will be another to-morrow. What he wants to know is whether there is any prospect of an ending of this state of things. Is the world learning sense? Are we any better, or are we getting worse? This is what he would like to know, and he would have been indebted to any organ of public opinion which would have given him guidance.

2. A DANGER, BUT NO WARNING.

War, like all things good and evil, comes from ideas, yet our press hardly warned us of certain ideas which were being promulgated before the war in a neighbouring

country, and, to some extent, in our own. It has been truly said that a new philosophy may be a more powerful enemy than all the navies in the world, and therefore well worth knowing about. It is safe to assume that up till 1914 only a small fraction of the British people had heard of the German "philosopher" Nietzsche, and that only a fraction of these had any idea of the nature of his teachings. On the appearance of a new translation of one of his works, the usual notice appeared in the review columns of the papers, and that was practically all, with very rare exceptions. If only one influential journal had really sought to rouse the people to what those writings meant, it would have done the world a greater service than if it had given us the secret facts of the naval and military organization of Germany, and their plans for the invasion of Belgium.

There may have been room for differences of opinion before the war as to the real meaning of militarism in Germany. Some writers argued that German militarism was *defensive*, and was imposed on the nation by her geographical situation, and by the "Russian menace." But meanwhile Nietzsche—a favourite author of the German soldier, according to their own authorities—was preaching in plain language every diabolical cruelty which Germany's enemies have since had reason to charge her with, and worse. His influence in Germany has been denied, but the virus of his teachings permeates German "national" literature. Bernhardt, Treitschke, Freytag-Loringhoven and the rest simply reek with it. It is idle to argue, as his apologists do, that Nietzsche was not an upholder of German nationalism. It is not a question of how he would apply his immorality, but of the immorality itself. This it is that has been imbibed by modern Germany. She has accepted his teaching and applied it to her own ends, as, in fact, she was justified in doing, according to Nietzschean principles. The pronouncements of German publicists that we have read from time to time are the effusions of men who have drunk so deeply at this poisoned fount that it has

entered into their very being. Even so late as January 1918, after these doctrines had already led to the slaughter of millions, we read the following in an extract from a speech by General von Liebert, speaking at the Conservative Congress at Halle:—

For us there is only one principle to be followed, *and we must recognize no other*. We hold that Might is Right. We must know neither sentiment, humanity, consideration, nor compassion.

This is pure Nietzsche.

It is probable that, while a few people in this kingdom before the war understood the real nature of Nietzsche's "Superman," the majority were under the impression that this imaginary being created by the "philosopher" was an ideal of a superior type of man, as the name seems to imply—the final product of the forces of evolution—one who by constant upward striving should have conquered the powers of evil within and without, mastered the forces of nature, and turned them to the blessing and uplifting of mankind. How many realize, even to-day, that this madman's creation, as presented in his writings, is a being of ineffable filthiness and ferocity, from the contemplation of which the decent man turns away with horror and loathing?

It is not many years since Nietzsche died in a lunatic asylum, where he had been confined for a dozen or more terrible years; and there can be little doubt that he was morally insane when he produced some of his "greatest" works. His system is founded on Darwinism—the real Darwinism, not the modern version. His works have a great vogue in Germany, and there is a considerable Nietzsche literature, written for the most part by his admirers, but in some few instances by opponents.

Nietzsche was an anti-Christian—the only one we have come across—who condemned Christianity for its *success*, and not for its failures. Most opponents of Christianity point to the inconsistencies and hypocrisies—real or otherwise—of Christians, and endeavour to prove

from these that the religion of Christ does not produce the virtues which it sets out to produce. Nietzsche was at least sane enough to see the fallacy of this. He recognized, and in fact *insisted*, that our present ideas of virtue, love, honour, kindness, pity, are based upon the teachings of Christ. He pressed this to a degree that even a Christian apologist, desiring it to be true, might find difficult to maintain. He saw that, spite of all the failures of the ages, it was the religion of Christ that had raised the standards, and softened the institutions, of the nations which had been influenced by its teachings, and that, *exactly in proportion as those teachings had been honestly received and acted upon*, love had triumphed over hate, and virtue over vice. And Nietzsche loathed virtue, and loved vice and cruelty, with an intensity of passion which it would be difficult to exaggerate. In fact, it is more than probable that it was his own vehement wickedness and passion, joined to his inveterate and shameless vanity, that drove him to the madhouse. A man need have a strong brain to stand the strain of all the evil passions and schemings against the human race that surged through that dark mind, to its final undoing.

Nietzsche was almost as violent against the ordinary modern agnostic as he was against the Christians. The point which he laboured incessantly to make was as follows—and we cannot say it was altogether illogical. The present age, according to him, or at least all in it that counts, is practically agreed with him in rejecting all real belief in God and Christ. But, he argues, the whole of our accepted ideas of duty to one's neighbour, in all its various manifestations of love, honour, truthfulness, kindness, generosity, sympathy, pity, and consideration for our fellows—all our present ideas of "morality," in short—are consciously or unconsciously based upon our belief in a God, and especially in the God presented by Christ, the great Father who cares for His children, and demands that we should care for one another. Apart from such belief, there is no obligation

to any kind of consideration for each other, *and such consideration is wrong, and opposed to "nature."* Against such moral obligation he opposes, in his own words, the "noble ideal" of "the deification of passion, revenge, cunning, anger, voluptuousness." God being dead, His Christ being proved a visionary or an impostor, His morality ought to perish with Him; and Nietzsche pours a not ill-deserved scorn on the modern "thinker" who would reject the gospel of Christ, and yet retain the principles of that gospel as the basis of our mutual relations. Christ has gone, he says; let the Christian virtues go with Him.

Incidentally, we believe that if Christ is allowed to go—that is, to go from the consciousness of the age—the Christian virtues *will* go with Him, and we shall have the hell upon earth that Nietzsche yearned for.

The fact cannot be made too plain that Nietzsche expressly preached vice of every kind. We have seen this fact contradicted. His apologists say we do not understand him. But we understand Nietzsche, as we hope to show, and we think we understand his apologists. Unbridled lust, cruelty for cruelty's sake, torture, massacre, deceit, selfishness, "exploitation" (his favourite word), the treading down and trampling on of every right of the people, and of the people themselves; these are his "virtues." The compassions of Christ for the people seem to put him in a frenzy. The idea that any consideration should be shown to the "herd" (the name by which he invariably designated the people, *workers and middle classes alike*) was anathema to him. The masses are merely of interest as tools of the great men. "For the rest," he says, "they may go to the devil and the statistician."

His idea, specifically expressed, is to make the "imperfect" classes yet more imperfect, that they may serve as slaves. It is thus summed up by one of his disciples and translators: "Nietzsche advocates a genuinely superior ruling class at one end of the social scale, and an actually inferior ruled class, with slaves as its basis, at the opposite social extreme."

It is true the subject of these teachings has received some slight ventilation from time to time in certain journals. Some have even admitted into their columns articles written by admirers of Nietzsche in this country. It would have been equally justifiable to admit articles extolling the ethics of the burglar, the procurer or the cannibal. Nietzsche would use women solely for the gratification and amusement of the male, and for the breeding of infant slaves or aristocrats, as the case might be, but even women, to their eternal shame, have entered the lists for him, and that, too, in English journals and newspapers.

Some of his apologists have advanced the plea that Nietzsche's "philosophy" was a kind of eugenics. Others have pretended that his idea was that his "great men," being the natural masters, should be supreme for the good of the community, as they would naturally be more gifted to rule. But Nietzsche himself expressly scouted such an idea. No thought is to be given to the people, to their rights or to their lives, except as they may serve as the instruments of the pleasure of the aristocrats. It is the people for the aristocrats—not the aristocrats for the people. His own illustration of what he *does* mean is clear. He uses the figure of a certain creeping plant (the aristocrats) found in tropical countries, which twines itself round the oak in the forest (the people), and raises itself up by its help till it finally emerges above the trees, waving its arms and exulting in *its own joyous existence* in the sunlight.

And the true Nietzschean would equally reject such a pretence. Nietzsche regards Socialism, which he loathes, as the natural outcome and fruit of Christianity. This is how one of his British translators and commentators pictures the probable results of the joint triumph of Christianity and Socialism:

"The 'lambs' might be left in peace for a century or so. Then would come the awakening. The descendants of gifted leaders, for whom life in such an unhealthy atmosphere would be intolerable, would be found in the

armies of those nations where democracy is still an unknown word, and a proper system of castes prevails. The Turks, let us hope, would act the part of the Zarathustrian eagle, and swoop down upon their helpless prey. Let us hope, too, that the historian of those times would have to record bloodier massacres than any hitherto described in history." (*The Quintessence of Nietzsche*, by J. M. Kennedy.)

Truly, even to-day, we little realize what we are up against in Germany, for it is that country which has sought to adopt the rôle of the "Zarathustrian eagle," and furnished us with massacres which answer to the above writer's elegant description.

Why were not the people, who support the newspapers with their pence, warned that this new set of ideas was arising, and had made tremendous headway; ideas which, if unchecked, would sweep away every safeguard of peace and decency of life? We have instanced Nietzsche, because he was avowedly and typically an immoralist, and the foremost of them all. But the dread truth is that immoralism generally was making such terrible headway, especially in the realm of ideas—though also largely permeating daily life—that disaster in one form or another loomed inevitably before mankind. How *can* a thousand million human beings live at peace together in one world, with conflicting "interests," with the means of rapid access to each other's domains, and with the means to hand for inflicting wholesale injury and death on each other, when once the appeal to moral sanctions has been abandoned?

It is not merely that there is moral failure, or that new and dangerous evils have manifested themselves of recent years, but that a set of ideas is being rapidly propagated which formally denies any appeal to right at all, which in fact denies that there is any "right," and makes the supposed interests or the passions of the individual or the nation the sole court of appeal.

Nietzsche's "Zarathustra" appears to have no connection, or even affinity, with the real Zarathustra or Zoroaster.

And the "apology" offered for Nietzscheism by one of its adherents, is that *many, consciously or unconsciously, are already acting in accordance with its principles!*

3. THE STUNT-HOUND.

If we be right in our view, journalism generally has been guilty of a grave error of omission, and it would be well advised in future to study and to teach us the things that really belong to our peace. Not to be over occupied with the froth on the top of the water, but to study the deep currents, and show us whither they are carrying us. It is hard to see how we can hope for this, however, till we break with the fatal tradition of regarding journalism, together with so many other departments of human activity, merely from the point of view of a commercial proposition. "Give the people what they want," is the cry; and too often, alas, they do not want the truth, and will spend their penny on a rival journal if you give them too much of it.

There is a type of journal, however, already incidentally referred to in our earlier pages, against which our complaint is not of this negative character. While the more reputable papers have in our judgment not done what they might to stem the current of evil, the other sort, generally known as the Yellow Press, has done its best to help it along. This class of journal, at one time filled with fulsome adulation of the criminal lunatic who ruled over Germany, at another was screaming itself hoarse with demands for just those steps which would have precipitated the conflict we sought to avoid. The German menace, like the "menace" from every other country, has been used by them and their friends as a pretext for attempting to filch political and commercial advantages at the expense of the community. Their remedy for the German danger was to make us like Germany, to turn the people into slaves, and themselves into slave-owners. The realization of their ideals would have proved a more awful fate for England, and would

have involved a more ghastly future for the world, than even the war is likely to bring in its train.

To-day, by deriding all the spiritual issues for which we have fought in the war, by talking in the language of commercialism and territorialism—and in the language of Germany—they have defamed our name and our fame among the nations; they have bred the suspicion in the minds of the workers that the war was a capitalists' war; they have provided the material which enabled the rulers of Germany to persuade its people that England's motives were the same as their own, and that all our professions to the contrary were rank hypocrisy. Had President Wilson not had a soul above the scurrility of this syndicated journalism, its insults and abuse might have turned the scale in America against the cause of the Allies, and even have led that country to withhold supplies in the hope of stopping the war, a course which could have led to but one result. By their hatred of the Russian revolution, their unbridled insults and slanders against its leaders, and their scarcely veiled sympathy with the Russian ruling caste, they turned that nation against us till it lost all faith in the Allies, helped to pave the way for Bolshevism, and caused the Russian people to look upon England—the home of freedom—as a more bitter foe to their cause than Germany itself. We are aghast as we read the speeches and proclamations of Russian leaders, in which we are held up to the people as a nation warring in the interests of capitalism, militarism, and territorial aggrandizement; but they are able to quote chapter and verse from English newspapers of this class in support of their statements; and this blaring Imperialism is taken by them as the voice of England. This press neither helped to preserve peace, nor to win the war, and unless our Government can find courage to master it, it will yet land us in deeper trouble than any we have yet known.

The appearance of this singular production is a phenomenon of modern times. There does not seem to be anything like it in history. Yet we know there is

nothing new under the sun, and consequently we look to see what old thing this new manifestation corresponds to. The search need not take us long.

In past days, the wealthy, or that section of them who were antagonistic to the advancement and well-being of the masses—for we are not justified in condemning all the wealthy—were able to impose their will on the people by force. Deprived of knowledge, denied a voice in the government of their own country, the people were unable to help themselves, and remained the more or less passive instruments of the will of their masters, for whom they existed largely to be exploited. Good men, whose memories are now seldom even thanked, fought and suffered, and even died, to remedy these conditions, until at length the people were put in a position to learn so much of the truth as can be learnt by reading, and to send representatives to Parliament to influence its legislation in the interests of all, instead of in the interests of a class. This is the dearly-bought privilege which we now seem anxious, at the bidding of any journalistic or other flatterer, to fling away with both hands.

What followed the placing of power in the hands of the people is well-known history. The champions of privilege were alarmed; consternation spread through their camp. There was no knowing where this thing might end. They would no longer be able to pass laws condemning to death, or to a fate worse than death, any worker who resisted their will, or who was unwilling to slave from dark to dark again for a pittance that did not represent a tenth part of the value of his labour. They would no longer be able to enact legislation framed in the sole interests of the wealthy; the people might think that life, as well as property, was sacred, and possibly even more so. Gradually, however, there dawned on the minds of those who loved not the people the conviction that all was not yet lost. There might even be a way whereby this small modicum of education which they had received should be turned against them. It was very slight, consisting for the most part of merely

the ability to read, and in many cases to read badly. Their masters would do the rest; they would educate them to their own ends, and turn this newly acquired literacy into a means for the re-enslavement of the people. This thing which we complain of so bitterly in the case of Germany, where it was done formally, systematically and efficiently by the State, has been done here—not so completely, yet with considerable success—by the class which, owing to the power of money, has an influence rivalling that of the Government itself.

Let there be no mistake about the facts. If practically the whole of the German people were taught and drilled into a state of mind which has led to their own undoing—the teachers being the State in all its various ramifications—it is no less true that a similar effect has been brought about in our own country among a considerable section of the community, who have been deluded into placing themselves under the tutelage of those who dread above all things a really enlightened and *thinking* proletariat. And the chief instrument of these gentry is the Yellow Press. This is the new means by which the old grip on the people is still maintained, and by which they hope to tighten that grip. The old moneyed classes would probably have considered themselves above employing such a means. Theirs was to command, not to cajole and woo the people. But adversity makes strange bed-fellows; it was that or nothing, and many have not scrupled to link up their fortunes with the new and vulgar plutocracy which has undertaken the task of “managing the mob” by means of this sinister journalistic weapon.

It requires a peculiar combination of qualities to wield that weapon effectively. The man who would be a successful exploiter of this type of journalism must be, first and foremost, without conscience; he must be callous to the ruin he causes, devoid of all the finer feelings which alone make life worth living to a really *human* being. Hypocrisy is of the very essence of his requirements, for, though the possession of a real spirit of chivalry, patriotism, or love for the people, would be fatal to

his ambitions, yet he must be able to simulate all these—to be more royalist than the king, more democratic than the people. He must have a strong strain of essential vulgarity in his nature, which shall give him a sure touch in appealing to the lowest instincts of the meaner spirits, as well as to the passions of the thoughtless and ignorant. He may be ennobled—but remains ignoble; he may be honoured—but is dead to honour; may be rich—but he exhibits a poverty of soul that the poorest need not envy. All these charming qualities—with, above all, an instinctive cunning, and a genius for *exploitation*—are united in this peculiar type that it is the “glory” of modern civilization to have produced.

The Yellow Press is not really new even in its methods. More than half a century ago, Archbishop Trench wrote the following in his book *On the Study of Words* :—

“If I wanted any further evidence of the moral atmosphere which words diffuse, I would ask you to observe how the first thing men do, when engaged in controversy with others, is ever to assume some honourable name to themselves, such as, if possible, shall *beg the whole subject in dispute*, and at the same time to affix on their adversaries a name which shall place them in a ridiculous or contemptible or odious light. A deep instinct, deeper perhaps than men give any account of to themselves, tells them how far this will go; that multitudes, utterly unable to weigh the arguments on one side or the other, will yet be receptive of the influences which these words are evermore, however imperceptibly, diffusing. By argument they might hope to gain over the reason of a few, but, by help of these nicknames, the prejudices and passions of the many.”

This lesson has been well learned and availed of by the class of journal we are considering. At the very outset of raising any issue which is likely to lead to controversy, they make a rule of presenting it in such a light as shall brand with infamy all who may be guilty of differing from them. Your one dream in life may have been to make England truly great. The *Dande-*

lion comes out with some view or suggestion, the adoption of which you consider would belittle and dishonour your country. One of its dupes, who has read his *Dandelion* at breakfast, and by lunch-time thinks the idea was his own, brings it out with great solemnity, and you state your objections. "Oh!" he replies, "I did not know you were a 'Little Englander'." He even thinks the idea of "Little Englander" was his own too! Yet he has devoted no more intelligence or thought to the assimilation of what he swallowed with his breakfast than he has to the digestion and assimilation of his boiled egg. He swallowed the one as he did the other, and it has simply become part of him.

The expression "Yellow Press" is itself a case in point. By adopting the name we, of course, prove nothing; we only use it because it has now come to be part of the language, and consequently identifies in two words the thing against which we warn all who love their own souls and the souls of their fellow-men. "Yellow" means nothing, so far as we know. We might have called it blue, because it is so often in a state of real or simulated "blue funk"; or purple, on account of its remarkable gift for working itself into a purple passion; or even red, from its rage for painting, not only the map, but also the town, that colour. But we see no object in multiplying nicknames—there are too many already, and they make it difficult for us to think clearly of the thing behind the name, apart from the stigma which has been attached to it by its *sobriquet*. It is the *thing* we are up against, the thing that has probably done more to lower us as a nation, to debauch the minds of the people, and to blacken our name in the eyes of the world, than any other one single agency.

The policy of this press is the policy of the "stampede." Deliberately, craftily, and in accordance with their ingrained belief that the people are "mostly fools," they lay their plans to get them on the run before they shall have had time to think. If the people should think, the results would be fatal to the *Dandelion* and all its

family. Their great delight is to give a yelp—and set all the other curs yelping too if possible—at the heels of the herd, and to follow them up with their din till they have got them into the quagmire. Or they will select some patient animal, quietly labouring at his task, fasten on him, bury their fangs in his flesh, worry him, and never leave him till he is either dead, or so mangled that he is only fit to be kept in a paddock for the remainder of his days. Their object is not to save the people, but to have them helpless and at their mercy. Practically all the measures which the press in question seeks to promote are directed to this end. We do not profess to believe that democracy will ever save the world, but in so far as democracy means the people, and the cause of the people, the man whose heart is not with the democracy stands convicted as an enemy of society. And these men have no love for democracy. For them the people exist to be used, exploited, harnessed to their chariots. One principle will be found to govern all the measures they favour. Liberty, in the true sense of the word, is an abomination to them. The war itself is to be used, if they can make it possible, as an excuse for permanently fastening on the people chains from which they had broken free, and is to be made the pretext for inventing new shackles. The game is as old as history—it was old in Shakespeare's day; a people freed from war's alarms, freed from real or bogus scares, and left to form its conclusions from a sober presentment of the facts, would have a chance to think; and it might think some things which would be highly inconvenient to those who are so anxious to relieve them of that trouble. Therefore the game is to keep the people on the run; harry them, "chivvy" them, put them off the scent—red herrings are cheap. And in the last resort, if these things pall through constant usage, foment jealousies among the people, and set them quarrelling among themselves.

If a voice was raised in protest during the time of struggle, a general yelp went up to drown it. "Shut

up! Get on with the war!" Yet while we have been fighting the most momentous war in the world's history, they have never for one moment ceased to pursue frantically their own private ends, and to set these before the one paramount duty of winning the war.

4. PRESS OR PARLIAMENT ?

There is probably no surer indication of the real temper of these journalistic guides than their hatred of the elected chamber of Parliament. The average Member of Parliament does not get a chance to talk as much in a year as these reticent gentlemen talk through the columns of their journals in a week. But that does not matter. They have christened Parliament the "talking-shop," and the trick has worked. They endeavour to throw on to the supporter of parliamentary institutions the onus of approving everything said and done in the House of Commons, though the average man naturally disapproves of at least one-half of its proceedings (some of us would admit to three-quarters). But the man anxious to see fair play given to the desires and aspirations of others will be the most strenuous upholder of the institution of Parliament, even if at a given moment he disagrees with every one of its activities.

If this press has not already rendered us too dizzy to think steadily for five minutes together, let us endeavour to consider this question of Parliament frankly and seriously. Let us stick at nothing; if on reflection it seems preferable that we should be governed in some other way, let us join in this great "stunt" to destroy representative government. All we want is to be governed *well*. Every people that likes can be master in its own house, and we will be master in ours; therefore if a better institution can be devised we will set it up, and pull down the old one.

Let us, for the sake of argument (though for the sake of argument only), admit the worst that the enemies of parliamentary institutions have ever said or hinted, and

- more. We will assume that Mr. Asquith was in the pay of the Kaiser (Lord Haldane is, of course, a German in disguise). Let our present Premier be all that his present admirers used to call him, or the mere tool of the Yellow Press itself, as some of his old friends now suggest. Lord Grey brought about the war by his ineptitude and vanity. Lord Kitchener was a heaven-born genius in 1914, and was removed by a kindly Providence a year or so later because he had come near to losing the war by his obstinacy and incapacity. Mr. Austen Chamberlain planned the Mesopotamian muddle, and carried it out with the aid of his fellow-traitors in the House. Mr. Bonar Law is too weak to serve any useful purpose whatever, and Mr. Balfour too refined for touching practical affairs in this practical world. In short, without unmasking in further detail the ineptitude and villainies of the members of both chambers, let us frankly admit that, among the whole crowd, Lord Milner is the only true British patriot, and Sir Edward Carson the only genuine democrat. And what are they among so many?

If it be said that we have not correctly presented the case made against Parliament by its enemies—which is quite possible—then we will admit in advance the case as they would present it, whatever it may be. For the purposes of our argument we will give them their case before we hear it. And if they can prove to their own satisfaction that the whole institution is rotten, we need not set ourselves here to gainsay them.

The case against Parliament then, we will say, is proved. We will have no more of it. We cannot afford to be governed by a corrupt set of triflers and muddlers, and we will sweep away the whole vile brood.

Now we will make a fresh start, and a clean one. We refuse to be fettered by any precedents, and will appoint our Government *de novo*. We are making a fresh constitution. Let there be no haste, no pushing in of claimants to power; the country is going to appoint whom it likes. The people will meet together in their various towns and districts, and discuss this momentous question with

all the seriousness befitting so grave a matter, on which hang the issues of life or death for the nation. One point they are all agreed upon—they must have the wisest and most able rulers that the country can furnish. The second point likewise finds them of one mind—they must have honest men, devoted to the cause of the commonwealth. Beyond this nothing calls for decision at this stage except the manner of election, the number of rulers they shall appoint, and the period for which they shall rule. No one would maintain at this time of day that the country would be likely to place its affairs in the hands of a single legislator; and after settling the approximate size of the legislative body they would have to set about appointing it. It is probable that the simplest method would be chosen. We will divide the country into sections, they would say, corresponding in number with the number of legislators we have decided upon. Each section will seek out a man of the highest probity and wisdom that it can find. As you may not always be able to agree on the individual who shall best answer this description, in order to help you to a decision, any man willing to serve shall present himself before you for examination. He shall be free to lay his views before you, and if they please you not then you will not choose him. You may also hear what his friends, and even his enemies, shall have to say on the matter; you may freely discuss it between yourselves, and every one among you—for you are all equally concerned—shall have a voice in the choosing, except he or she be disqualified by reason of youth, or be a proven enemy of the State, or a person of feeble mind.

It might seem that such a completely fresh start would constitute a revolution; without the misery and bloodshed of a revolution of violence, and ensuring, as that never does, that the wishes of the people, so far as they can be reconciled, will really be carried out. But under our present conditions we can have a revolution at any, or at every general election, if we so wish. We can bring it about without any difficulty at the very next

general election by first making up our minds what we want, and then sending men to Parliament to give effect to our wishes.

At every such election we have nearly the same opportunity as if we were framing an entirely new constitution in the way we have pictured (the House of Lords could not stand in the way if we elected a Commons to remove it). For what would be the outcome of such a fresh start as we have contemplated? The people would choose their rulers; and when they assembled together they would be—a Parliament! Called by some other name, perhaps, but still—a Parliament. A little larger or a little smaller, possibly, than the present one, or even elected by a more scientific machinery than that we have indicated, but still a Parliament. The electors might even vote by classes, instead of by geographical areas. This should commend itself to those who believe in the representation of class interests in Parliament, but it would make labour supreme in the government of the country. In any case our newly-elected Parliament would probably be more representative than the present House of Commons; it would almost certainly be more powerful—though this only strengthens our case—for we cannot imagine a sane people of their own free will permitting any other body to override the decisions of their representatives. Neither would they be likely to appoint a press syndicate as the dictator of their destinies.

The old story of the crew of a ship becalmed in the mouth of the great Amazon river, and dying of thirst, has more than one application to the life of the nation to-day. They thought they were in mid-ocean, and knew not that they were surrounded by fresh water. And we, without their excuse, will believe anything rather than that our remedy is at hand—anything rather than that we are only suffering from our own folly and turpitude. Our eyes, like the fool's, are in the ends of the earth. We think salvation will come from thence, and refuse to believe that we only need, like the becalmed sailors, to "dip it up."

We would ask those people who approve of the efforts of the Yellow Press to cripple Parliament, and give its powers into the hands of their own creatures, what they think they would really gain by this. Will the proprietors of your favourite journal give *you* a voice in the matter? By no means, for, as we have shown, this can only be done by giving us the fullest possible powers of self-government through our elected delegates. Their idea is rather that they themselves, self-appointed as they are, should nominate such men as may suit their purpose from time to time, and then, not to consult us in the only way we can be consulted, but to maintain that we *have* already declared our wishes. Whatever object they may be pursuing for the moment, they invariably say, "the country demands," or "what the people of this country want is," etc., etc. How like the Germans, who insisted that the people of Poland, Courland, and Lithuania had already expressed their "self-determination," and elected to remain under German rule, while resolutely refusing to give the people of those regions an opportunity of formally declaring what their wishes were in the matter.

If you have any views, any convictions, as to the government and policy of your country, there is only one clean way in which you can ensure that such views shall be given weight to. That is by upholding parliamentary institutions with all your might, doing all in your power to strengthen them, and allowing the views of others to have equal effect.

And there is only one way to get rid of Parliament; that is, not to consult the people at all, nor let them have any voice in the question of how they shall be governed. This is really the game of those whom we are now arraigning. True, they can hardly hope at present to abolish entirely the institution itself, but they are doing their best to bring it into contempt, and to break its power. And in measure as they reduce it to impotence, so they gird at it for that impotence, and seek to bring it still lower. In measure as they fear and hate a

free people, so they fear and hate a people's free representatives.

We have nothing to do here with party politics. We express no opinion as to whether the present or any Parliament is a good or a bad one. Colonel Repington may or may not have been right in his judgment of the Parliament in 1917 when he said: "A quarter of it is blind, a quarter fed with titles, and all the best men are away fighting." But if the present or any given Parliament leaves much to be desired, it is the fault of us who elected its members. We can always have men of our own choice to govern us. And this is the proof that those who attack parliamentary institutions are attacking our liberties. Either they will prevent us altogether from having men of our own choice, or they will so cripple their power when we have chosen them, that the people's chamber shall indeed be reduced to what they now call it—a talking-shop. Something on the old German model, with permission to discuss and to pass resolutions, but with no power to carry into effect anything which the people have sent them there to accomplish. With all its boasted "progress," Germany is a nation of slaves, and the Yellow Press is driving us along the same road.

It is heart-breaking to hear men, decently dressed, and posing as intelligent, taking up the latest cry of these journals, and grinding it out like so many gramophones. Perhaps the gentle reader of these lines has become a victim of the habit. If so, are you utterly ignorant of what it cost your forbears to obtain for us the measure of liberty—secured entirely by the institution of Parliament—which we enjoy? Is it wise, is it noble of you, to be in such indecent haste to throw away a treasure gained at so great a price? Do you really want to give up *your* right to a voice in the matters which concern our lives and liberties? Do you consider the heir who dissipates the fortune won by his father's toil and sacrifice a worthy model to copy? Yet you are an incomparably greater fool than he. I cannot flatter

you, as so many writers flatter their readers. You are an utterly unworthy son of your fathers, and—what bodes worse for our future—an utterly unworthy father of your sons.

Who finances this great engine that is destroying our liberties, destroying our intellects, destroying our sense of decency and our sense of humour, and threatening to destroy ourselves?

You do, gentle reader, if you purchase and read its publications. The people who put up their millions to furnish the capital could have effected nothing apart from you. Their capital would have been lost had they not been able to count on you. Their advertisement pages would not be worth a penny a column to advertisers but for you and thousands who, with you, enable them to quote large figures of circulation.

Before hostilities had been long in progress, the writer ventured the fairly obvious prophecy that, if we lost the war, it would be because the Yellow Press had stampeded the country. And now that such a terrible prospect has once or twice almost seemed within the sphere of possibilities—how near to irretrievable disaster we came in the fourth year of war few probably realize—how do you like the reflection that it would have been done on *your* money? If good men have been “knifed” by their assassin stab, if honest men’s reputations have been dragged in the mire by the slanders of their hirelings, if real patriotism has become a crime, while yellow “patriotism” is held to condone any offence against the people and its liberties, *you* have provided the money to bring this about. If men gifted with peerless knowledge and judgment in various spheres of national defence have been kicking up their heels in idleness, or eating out their hearts in a minor job, while those lacking these gifts were trying to do their work; if one Irish rebel, with his damnable record, can be elevated over the head of Parliament to a position of supreme responsibility at a moment of world crisis, while another is shot for

treason; if any yellow journalist may steal a horse, and laugh at the owner, while one of another tint dare not look over the hedge, whose fault is this but yours?

If it be true, as earnest men still believe, that in the beginning we really did set out to war with a lofty and holy vision, and rose in obedience to it, and went forth to walk in the way the Voice had bidden us take, willing rather to put all to stake than to lose our own souls, and all that made us men; if that voice in our ears has been drowned by the maddening clamour of this soulless syndicalism, and in place of vision darkness has come over our eyes, darkness that hides the face of God from us; and if in that darkness the cause committed to us is lost in final and irretrievable ruin—which may yet happen, even though the war be “won”—what shall we answer Him when He calls us to give an account of our stewardship? What if we can only confess that it was *our* pence, and *our* patronage, that armed and equipped the enemy at home, while we sent our sons to die fighting the enemy at the battle-front in Europe?

The power of this hydra-headed press, speaking by its score of mouths, to hypnotize its readers into saying just what it wants them to say, was nowhere more strikingly illustrated than in the stupid bleat for a “dictator.” The writer has courted discussion on the various occasions when this gramophone-grind has been worked off on him, and has encouraged the gramophone to endeavour to talk on its own. On every occasion he has met with the same strange phenomenon. The speaker has wanted a Dictator, a “strong man,” to “stop all this talk,” and get on with the war. They have had diverse views and ideas, but each one imagined that a dictator would necessarily have *his* views, and carry out *his* ideas, and stop the mouths of *the others*. In a word, the imaginary dictator in the mind of each speaker was *himself*, furnished with unlimited powers. When I have pointed out that perhaps the dictator might have

my views, and carry out *my* ideas, and stop *his* mouth, the look on his face was pitiable.

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The day will come when we *shall* have a Dictator. I do not know if He will suit the views of my readers, but He suits mine perfectly; and if I were allowed a voice in the matter (which I am not), I should give my vote for Him to come *now*.

For when He comes, He will make the evil beast to cease out of the land. The vile man shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl bountiful. Evil will no more be allowed to pass for good, nor bitter for sweet. For He will establish His throne in *righteousness*; and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. But He will first deal with the present unrighteousness, in order that He may establish His righteous throne above its ruins. God help us all to prepare our souls to meet Him, for His coming may be very near.

5. THE WATCH-DOGS AND LITERARY WOLVES.

It has been suggested to the writer that the press was perhaps wise to refrain from warning the public of the rise of Nietzscheism, as by calling attention to it they would only have succeeded in "booming" it, thus bringing about the very evil it was desired to avoid. This is, we fear, to give them too much credit; but even if we assume that it had acted from such a laudable motive, is it possible to imagine a graver error of judgment? The evil was working as leaven, and would work better for a time in the dark. Its votaries have succeeded in popularizing the idea of the "superman," without telling the people what it means. Men whom we might have assumed to be well-read have caught up and repeated the phrase, often without the slightest idea of what they are saying. Even so late as the year 1918, at a National Intercession service, the preacher informed his hearers

that we needed regeneration before we could become supermen! And while the phraseology has spread among those who may be quite innocent, its evil principles have taken root in many who are not so innocent.

It will not do to keep quiet about public evils any longer. Absolute frankness is necessary. Everything must be dragged out into the light, if we are to be saved. This is the day of battle between the forces of light and of darkness, and it must be fought to an issue. We may be war-weary, but if we weary in *this* fight, we shall be beaten, and shall go down to destruction. To cry "Peace, peace," when there is no peace, when the enemy is pressing the war with all his skill and cunning, is to play into his hands. And even to *desire* peace before the battle is won is worthy only of a traitor or a coward. So long as these forces retain the upper hand, and threaten, as they do, to submerge Christendom in hopeless ruin, the heart's language of every man who loves God and his fellows must be, in the words of Shakespeare's Lady Constance,

War! War! No peace!
Peace is to me a war.

We must no longer connive at the hiding of evil. We must not be afraid of "stirring up the mud." The mud is already so thick that it will soon reach the top and submerge us all if unchecked. We must not be afraid to unmask the enemy, or to drag him from his ambush; he only fights better behind it. Let the people know the extent of the forces that are ranged against them, and let all honest men welcome the challenge, and rise to it like men. We can go down but once; and better—far better—to go down fighting, that our children may live. But, Oh for a clear-cut issue! Let us force the enemy to disclose himself, and to say what he stands for. Force those who are on the side of the devil to range themselves openly on his side; and let true men cry, "Who is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me." I am for declaring war on all

God's enemies at once, if need be, and all man's enemies too. The continuance of their repeated assaults while we fritter away our energies in trivialities is becoming intolerable. We cannot have peace till the battle has been joined and decided, and, frankly, I for one do not want it. Constituted with an innate love for peace, loathing stress and turmoil, longing for rest and cessation from strife, yet the knowledge that the enemy is even now battering at the gates rouses in me the desire for battle, and even the joy of battle; and I pray God we may have it out, now, before it is too late.

And I believe I speak also for others.

But there is plenty of evidence that the press does *not* refrain from discussing subjects which might be prejudicial to the community. The detachment and "impartiality" with which our journals review immoral books and plays are notorious. In the same paper we find an appreciation of a serious work written by some scholar or thinker, honestly devoting his scholarship and talents to the blessing and enlightenment of his fellows, and an equally cordial appreciation of some play or novel, the very advertisements of which turn us sick. Which among them rose up to warn us against the vile travesty of the life of Christ written by the author of *Lewis Seymour and Some Women*? Whose place was it but theirs to warn their readers against reading this work without taking the precaution to read first the narrative of the apostolic eye-witnesses? Who else should have warned us that it was opposed to all the laws of probability and evidence? People nowadays know little of the insides of their Bibles, but journalistic reviewers should have that knowledge, if only as part of their literary education. Thousands of readers who are ignorant of what the case is that is presented in the New Testament have read this, or other books of the same type, and have not the faintest idea of the trick that has been practised upon them. They have not the wit to realize that the author of unsavoury novels—devoted to the detailed description of fornication and adultery—the man who

puts profane and offensive language into the mouths of the apostles in the same breath with which he makes them speak of God, is hardly likely to be the man to reveal the truth concerning the Gospel story. Not knowing that story, they are unable to realize how preposterous the professed explanation of it is, and the press, even those members of it which took money for advertising the work, had a duty to put them right. But the foolish readers are left to go on in the fond delusion that, because they have read such books, they are in a superior intellectual position to the simple soul who has studied the original Gospel story, and has found solid reasons for believing it to be true.

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It may be asked, how could the press have done anything to prevent the great catastrophe that has already overtaken Christendom? To find the answer to this question, it is first necessary that we realize the supremacy of *ideas* over every other force in the history and fate of mankind. The belief that "big battalions" are more potent than ideas is not merely the delusion of an infidel, it is also opposed to all experience for those who have not lost the faculty of observation and connected reasoning. Whether we recognize the fact or not—the moral factor is supreme. We have not to make it supreme; what we have to do is to recognize that it is ever operating—relentlessly, ceaselessly, unerringly. Had this elementary truth been grasped and acted upon—it is only the old truth that what we sow we reap—it is easy to see how we might have come to travel a very different road from the fatal one we have trodden.

Let us assume that the press had acted with a due recognition of this simple fact. This would have tended to destroy the popular delusion that a nation can sow an evil crop, and evade the harvest by cleverness or diplomacy. The people, who have now been so largely put off the scent as to the mutual relations of cause and effect, would have known that disaster must result from

evil principles, as thistles grow from thistledown. Is it too much to assume that, if the really dominant facts of the situation had been brought home to the people, an awakening would have taken place which would have led us to "consider our ways," and to amend them?

Imagine if, among all the scares and "stunts" that have been inflicted upon us of recent years, we had had one well-supported scare, or rather one outbreak of real concern, as to the moral state of Christendom. Imagine if, among all the irrelevancies that have been "boomed," some had made it their business to boom the truth that evil ways produce evil fruits. The alarms raised from time to time with regard to some particular symptom of that evil do not meet our case. These have been, at best, merely agitations for some alteration of law to mitigate that particular symptom, never a warning to alter *ourselves*. We have never known a journal to devote itself for even a few days to the consideration of the main issue, the most pressing and important of all. The watch-dogs have been dumb; and if ever we have had any qualms, they have even wagged their tails reassuringly to set us at rest. Yet, had the subject been ventilated with one-tenth of the seriousness and earnestness that the situation demanded, the position might have been saved.

To look facts squarely in the face is the first step to dealing with them. And imagine if these facts *had* been dealt with, and there had been only a moderate revival, such as we might reasonably have hoped for, of righteousness and of conscience towards God. We do not suggest that our newspapers should turn themselves into religious journals. That might not in all cases be an improvement. But we do suggest that it was their place to have dealt with the moral danger as frankly as they would with any other menace. If the people had responded (and the press boasts of its power), an atmosphere would have been created which would have made the German crime impossible. That crime was so outrageous that it needed morality to be at its lowest

ebb for it to be even thinkable. Such a revival as we have suggested must have penetrated even Germany itself. Even had its rulers still contemplated the outrage, it would have been impossible for them to count on the support of the nation, once that nation had been exercised on the question of right and wrong—the one subject that has been ignored in their whole stupid “education.”

V

THE GUIDES

1. CLEAN LINEN.

AN article appeared in *The Christian* in 1917 challenging the suggestion that the churches had failed, protesting strongly against the charge, declaring it to be vague, and demanding details.

Painful as the task is, we propose to set ourselves to attempting to meet the demand in some measure. We trust we may not err on the side of severity, though even this would probably be less mischievous than the more common fault of flattery. Flattery, whether open or covert, is one of the greatest curses of our times; it curses him that gives and him that takes. It is the weapon with which the devil often succeeds in destroying his dupes when all other means have failed.

In any case we shall not be writing in malice, for the writer is himself a member of one of the great denominations, and cannot but desire the true prosperity of the churches. If we cause offence, we are sorry, but we speak because we must.

How gladly would we have held our peace altogether had we dared. How much more gladly would we, if possible, have pointed to the churches as the one bright light in the darkness, the evidence of the truth of our religion, and the star to which our wistful eyes might turn as the herald of the coming day.

But, at such a time as this, self-deception would be self-destruction. Before we follow a light to lead us through the gloom, we must make sure it is a safe guide,

and not an *ignis fatuus* which will lure us deeper into the bog. And common honesty requires us to recognize that the churches are involved in the general ruin, that they have failed because they largely form part of the system that has failed—the world—and are not a thing apart. Instead of speaking of “the world and the Church,” as of two distinct institutions, it would often be more correct to speak of “the world with its churches.” For the world has its religion, and the churches are too often merely the expression of the world’s religion.

If the organized churches to-day truly represent the Bride of Christ, then woe to the man who says a word against them, for He will avenge His own. But a comparison of the churches of the world with the Church of the Scriptures renders such an identification impossible. We fail to recognize in them that “Bride of the Lamb, arrayed in the fine linen, clean and white,” which represents “the righteous deeds of the holy.”

It is sometimes said—mostly by themselves—that the churches have become of late too self-depreciatory, and that their failure is not so complete as they may have been disposed to think in their more chastened moments. The contrary is probably more true. The real things that are wrong are practically never confessed publicly; and the world as a whole, except in the case of avowed opponents of the Christian religion, does not as a rule go out of its way to cast unjust aspersions on the churches. The usual organs of public opinion are disposed to pay a certain tribute to religion. They largely take the churches at their own valuation, and generally treat them, as the official exponents of religion, with considerable deference. If anything, as regards public opinion towards the churches, the scales are rather weighted in their favour. They start with an assumption of goodness because they *are* churches, and because the tendency is to identify them with the religion which they ostensibly stand for. But there is a special warning in the Scriptures—addressed to the churches—to the effect that they will one day be judged according

to their *works*. It would be a healthy sign if they would endeavour to anticipate that day, by judging *themselves* now, without mercy, on the same principle. For if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged.

When we meet with a statement in the New Testament, or a prophecy in the Old, which refers in set terms to the purpose of the redemptive work of Christ, we find that in the vast majority of instances it is expressly coupled with the idea of *moral renewal* as an essential part of the object of that redemption. Christ is constantly presented as the Creator and Redeemer of a new humanity. Again and again it is insisted that He died to produce a *good* people. We may sing in our hymns about His saving us from judgment, and that is doubtless true; but the way the Bible puts it is that He is called the Saviour because He saves His people *from their sins*.

From first to last, the Christian revelation deals with moral questions, that is to say, with sin, and salvation from sin. It would seem reasonable therefore to expect that a people owing their origin to the New Testament should be experts in questions of right and wrong—experts, in fact, in goodness. Just as a scholar who is thoroughly grounded in his scientific text-books can understand things which are Greek to the uninitiated, so we might expect the Christian to be so grounded in *his* text-book as to be proof against sophistry and self-deception on ethical questions. In the world, moral questions may have become enmeshed in a tissue of falsities and conventions; the simple truth may have become twisted and distorted to suit the world's convenience; but the Christian should be able to strip it of all its entanglements, and to stand sure and firm in the bare elementals of justice, truth, and love. He should be able to apply these with clear vision to the problems of life, to steer a straight course by their guidance, and to dispel the fogs and mists from the pathway of others.

And he ought to be the exponent in his own person of what Christianity is. It is really asking very little, for instance, if we demand that at least, in all ordinary

dealings between man and man, the reputation of the man who is a church communicant or member should be beyond question. Were "Christians" really Christians, they would have earned this reputation as a settled and undisputed fact, on which the world might rely in every circumstance of life. They ought to have made it a truism that it is always safe to deal with a "Christian," that, like his Master, he is never seeking his own, and that your interests are always safe in his hands.

If the "churches" were simply so many sections of the real Church of Christ, the fact that a man is a communicant or a church member would be an answer to all inquiries concerning his character. *Would* such an answer satisfy the reader, if he were anxious for information concerning a man whom he proposed to bring into his business or into his family?

And yet, why should it not? The reason why it *would* not is, as all the world knows, that the churches simply swarm with people who, to say the least, are no better than those outside.

In all the conferences and "May Meetings" in which the condition of the churches is discussed with such professions of consternation, this is the simple factor, though the all-important one, which is constantly burked. Of late years, it is true, a good deal of confession of sins goes on, but the sins confessed are not the real ones, or at least not the dominant ones. The general attitude is that of "saints" confessing their little weaknesses, and not of sinners confessing their sins. The assumption is always made that the churches as a whole are really of a different texture from "the world"; that they really are in a position, if they only bestirred themselves, to confer inestimable benefits on the world; and that if the members would only attend the services more regularly, work a little harder in the Sunday school, organize more, and put larger coins in the plate, the cause would march right away to victory.

A friend of the writer's was once calling the attention of a church officer to specific evils in his church, and was

met with the reply: "I don't believe in talking about the church's sins; the world will do that quick enough. What we have got to do is to save those outside."

Could confusion be worse confounded? Is it possible for a man's moral judgment to be in a more hopeless muddle? For this was a case where it would have been a mercy to "save those outside" *from ever coming in*. We forbear to quote Christ's words to the Jews about their making of proselytes, and *what* they made of them when they had got them, because those words are possibly too severe to apply to all such cases as the foregoing; but they leap to the mind of any man who is familiar with His stinging rebuke, and "give him furiously to think."

Many a good soul will be troubled at our pressing this matter. "Why", they will ask, "should you turn the light on such things? You only give the enemy occasion to blaspheme."

My dear friend, the enemy already has plenty of occasion to blaspheme. And are you not making a wrong use of that oft-quoted expression? Who is it that causes the enemy to blaspheme? The Apostle Paul said to certain men who made religious professions, "The name of God is blasphemed among the heathen *through you*, as it is written." He doubtless had in mind the protest that was wrung from the heart of the prophet, as he saw what happened when the Jews went among the nations. The nations had heard a good deal about the "people of the Lord," and when they saw them, and saw their works, they exclaimed in amazement and derision, "*These* are the people of the Lord!" It was the spectacle of "religious" people doing wickedly that caused the enemy to blaspheme; *they* were the cause of the blasphemy, and not the man who showed them up. God Himself showed them up, and called the world to witness. We have every sympathy with the desire to avoid washing dirty linen in public, and if there were any evidence of an intention to wash it in private we would be silent; but the facts rather indicate that it

is not being washed at all. Yet *it must be washed*, even in public if necessary, that we go no longer in filthy garments. If this causes the enemy to blaspheme, he will be blaspheming *with rage*; for he will see that we are at last in earnest. He loathes clean linen, and will gnash his teeth at any sign of real washing of garments.

And he will do more than gnash his teeth; he will bury them in our flesh, for nothing rouses his animosity more than an honest endeavour to make him loosen his hold on the churches. The writer was once compelled to refuse to condone a certain state of things imposed on a church by those who really controlled it. When other arguments had failed, the pastor visited him, and informed him of the fate of a previous member who had refused to conform—the one real nonconformist in a Nonconformist church. The dominant men had been too strong for him—crushed him and broken him—and he died. Finding that the writer only received this as a piece of interesting—and useful—information, instead of accepting it as a warning, the visit and the warning were repeated, even more significantly. “You cannot do anything against these men,” said the pastor; “they are too strong; the best way is to submit.”

If the writer—who did not submit—is still alive, and even sometimes merry, to-day, this is due to the grace of God, for the suffering was very real, though in the writer’s case this was solely of a mental nature—his business affairs not being dependent on the interests controlled by “these men.”

2. THE “SYSTEM.”

We suggest that the time has come to deal frankly with a state of things which renders possible a traffic in church livings, professional revivalists advertising in religious journals for jobs, and all the other objectionable features which could not exist for a day if the general religious atmosphere possessed any degree of purity. Too often, arguments supposed to be in defence of Chris-

tianity are little more than attempts to rehabilitate the clergy and ministers in the eyes of the world, and to extol the work of the churches by presenting it in a light which bears little relation to the facts, as seen by one who knows them from the inside. The official representatives of Christianity really seem to believe that the faith of Christ stands or falls with *them*, a sad reflection both on their spiritual intelligence and their faith. If the religion of Christ be false, let it perish; if it is true, it is a self-evident certainty that it cannot perish. Yet even good, honest souls have unwarily adopted this mistaken attitude, and are often found, against their consciences and their better judgment, rebutting quite honest reflections made against the system and its adherents; denying, excusing, palliating, even misrepresenting, imagining that in so doing they are serving the cause of Christ.

This attitude on the part of religious people has caused the world at large, weakly enough, to adopt the same view. They, too, seem to identify Christianity with the system and its professional representatives, and appear incapable of grasping the idea of essential Christianity. It is almost impossible to get the ordinary man or woman to understand that religion is a question of God and of righteousness, of conscience, faith, and conduct, and not of clergy and systems. Time and again, when the course of conversation has seemed to warrant it, the writer has endeavoured to introduce the subject of God, or, if you will, of religion, or our relations with God; and practically always with the same result. The person spoken to, if unfriendly, has immediately let out about "parsons"; if friendly, has replied by a gushing reference to "our minister," to let it be seen that he or she is on good terms with that personage, and therefore, presumably, at one with the speaker.

The majority of people never get through the seemingly impenetrable screen of the system to the God beyond. The result is that the conscience is not reached, and God and His requirements are not known. The conse-

quent tendency is for the system to stand in the place of God. The seeker after truth and peace gets no farther than the screen, and is tempted to regard it as God, and to believe he has found therein the object of his quest. The standard that obtains in the particular religious organization that he favours becomes *his* standard, the final bar of appeal for his conscience. To satisfy the requirements of such standard is the highest he aims for, though many things pass muster there which will not pass with God. To make his peace with his church is, for him, to make his peace with God.

This is the frank doctrine of the Church of Rome, but its spirit, unavowed and unsuspected, runs through all the churches, from Anglicans to Plymouth Brethren.

If we do not dwell at length on the brighter side of Christian testimony, it is by no means because we ignore its existence. Thank God for all the grand souls who are spending their lives in sacrificial service, laying down those lives for others, at home and abroad, in the spirit of their Master. Without these men and women—not only the prominent ones, but perhaps much more those who work in obscurity—we should ere this have perished of sheer corruption. These are the salt whose purifying influence has kept the whole body from utter decay, the righteous men for whose sake perchance God has yet spared Sodom. Such people are often practically unrecognized by the world. They do not strike the ordinary imagination, and their portraits do not appear in the religious papers. They are just people who have simply, but really, believed, given their lives over to God, accepted His standard of values, and, in all simplicity, are shaping their lives accordingly. They have faith; to them God is actually a reality, and the commands and assurances of His Word infinitely more real than the illusory rubbish they see and hear around them. They see no object in seeking credit or recognition in any form; they work for the “Well done!” of their Master in “that day.” Those who strive for recognition and pre-eminence, either in the religious world, or in the world pure and simple,

are men of infidel heart, whatever their religious professions. Many will awake to shame and everlasting contempt, at whose funerals very fine things have been said; while they who believe, and whose works follow their faith, shall shine as the sun, and as the stars for ever and ever. Many a new star will blaze in the new heavens yet to be created, while luminaries in whose beams many are basking to-day will be quenched in utter gloom.

We do not think that the Church of Rome, with its appalling record of crime, can possibly make any appeal to a man who is concerned about the realities we are considering, and we therefore do not propose to discuss it. Roman Catholicism is not yet the prevailing religion in our country, and it is religion at home that we wish to deal with more particularly. What then is the picture which presents itself to the mind of the average inhabitant of this island when he hears the word "church"? Is it not too often somewhat as follows?

At the head, as its recognized leader and exponent, a man who has received what passes for an education, but little versed, and often little interested, in the great questions which concern man's temporal and eternal destiny. He is drawn from a class which, from its opportunities, should be a more intelligent class than the mass of the people, but a class whose traditions and sympathies are inimical to the interests of those people. He is on friendly terms with the *élite* of the neighbourhood, but the poor—who form the bulk of the souls committed to his charge—he does not understand and, if the truth is to be told, does not very much like. The existence of the poor, if he has any conscience at all, or even if he is merely anxious to make a decent show, is a constant worry and nuisance to him; and he will sometimes make pathetic efforts to "get hold of the working man," though what to do with him when he has got him he has not the faintest idea. If he takes part in social and political questions, you find him "on the side of the nobs,"—the "gentry," the landowner, the brewer;

and he and his coterie are among the most formidable obstacles to all efforts for the amelioration of the conditions which govern the lives of the people. His knowledge of the scriptures, which form the only warrant for the existence of the Christian Church, is not profound, and no man in his senses would ever dream of consulting him on any deep question of principle or righteousness which might be racking his soul. In fact, he is shy of really spiritual matters, and is distinctly uncomfortable, and anxious to get away, if you seek to get him to discuss such questions personally. Rightly or wrongly, he often does not strike one as a very manly type, and does not shine among men; he is rather apt to be looked upon as "a man among women, and a woman among men." He does not very often visit the male members of his flock, but he or his curate (often an expert in lamb-stealing) will visit the poorer women when the husband is at work, and warn them of the dangers of chapel-going, or seek to impress them with the importance of having their children christened.

There will be good people in his church, but the group that is more usually known, and often feared, among the people as the "church party" is not composed of the more spiritual members. It is more often a clique whose activities are devoted to opposing every merciful effort for reform or liberty. They do their best to "down" every movement set on foot in the interests of the people, and of justice and humanity. If such a movement succeeds in spite of them, they will then give it their blessing, patronize it, get one of their number elected as president, and proceed to nullify its objects. This is one of their most time-honoured ruses, and great is their glee when they succeed in "dishing the reformers," and turning the movement into one for the furtherance of their own objects. Their fear is upon those workers who depend on the goodwill of the local employing class for a living; they intimidate these from open association with any men or movements of which they do not approve, and even scare the weaker ones into joining their side.

They are a valuable recruiting agency for the local church—not that they know anything about religion—but their social organizations, whist-drives, dancing parties, tennis clubs, and “other attractions” make effective groundbait for poaching. These affairs are, of course, “purely unsectarian and non-party,” but the newly-joined member is soon made to feel a chill if he does not accommodate himself to the prevailing atmosphere. This sort of thing is all that is known of the church’s activities in many neighbourhoods; if they do anything else its results are not very apparent.

Yet “the Church,” at conference after conference, solemnly discusses the question of “the masses.” Proposal after proposal is put forward with a view to finding a means for bringing the people under their influence, and so removing the reproach of the fact that the people do not like them. But what do they want the masses for? Is it for love of their souls? Is it for the sake of the people, or for the sake of their church, and the interests which that church too often represents?

A casual glance at the subjects set down for discussion, and at the general tenor of the discussions, indicates that too often it is merely the latter. It is their own influence, and that of the privileged classes, they fear for, and the interests of a church which, when all is said and done, does not really *love* the poor, spite of the good men in it who form such noble exceptions. It is vain and false to maintain otherwise. The record of the legislative activities of their dignitaries in the House of Lords has been one long tale of implacable hostility to the people, and to the cause of justice and mercy; and they have never yet shown any sign of either confessing their sin or amending their ways. But the times are getting too serious to permit any longer of make-believe, and the sooner they realize that the game is up the better. If they expect to be taken seriously as the representatives of Christianity, it is not sufficient to talk, it is not sufficient to change their methods. It is *themselves* they must change, from the marrow outwards.

Yet these men constantly talk as if they were the competent spiritual guides of the people! It is true they are beginning to admit shortcomings, obsolescence, slackness, and other failings. We must put our house in order, they say; we must get abreast of the times; we have perhaps been too much occupied with our own concerns, and must broaden our outlook; we must try to get a better understanding of the needs of the working man, and be ready for him when he comes home from the war, *or we shall lose him!*

What right have they to talk as though they stood for God to the people? What have they got for the people? How many of them know the love of Christ? How many of them ever showed any marks of having been ordained by Him? Where are the fruits of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them? Where is that anointing from the Holy One, which marks the true minister of Christ? What do they know of the love of God to man? How many have that love burning, as a consuming fire, in their own hearts?

Our solemn advice to men in the ministry whose hearts are not aflame with the compassions of Christ, is that they should quit the business altogether. You only add to your own condemnation, and give God a bad name, by staying where you are, for so long as you are in the ministry you are taking His Name in vain. You have mistaken your rôle altogether; you are not the men who should minister the gospel, but the men who should listen to its message. That message is addressed to you, with its warning of judgment, its call to repentance, and its promise of pardon. It was for you Christ died, but until you know His love and forgiveness you cannot minister Him to others. Until you are saved, you cannot save the people.

We should not have felt free to repeat the old gibe about "the fool of the family" had it not recently received apt confirmation from a clergyman who clearly has first-hand knowledge. Canon Burroughs, Canon of Peterborough, in his *Valley of Decision*, already quoted,

tells how often at Oxford one hears with a sigh "the usual answer to the usual question." "Oh, I mean to try for the 'Indian Civil,' and if I fail . . . I may take Orders." "Taking Orders," he adds, has sometimes been given, quite naïvely, as the *dernier ressort*. If all else fails, one can always go into the Church.

Can we wonder that another authority, quoted by Canon Burroughs, says that "it would be almost impossible to exaggerate the impotence and insignificance of the Church of England before the war"? And we are disposed to think that the war has effected no improvement, in spite of that great bubble, the "National Mission," which took twelve months to blow, but seems to have burst leaving hardly a splash behind.

Yet what other sort of fruit could we expect from a system in which the members of the House of Lords hold thousands of "livings" (the word itself tells a tale), and thus have power to appoint "ministers of Christ"?

Consider for a moment the Founder of the Christian Church. Think of the picture we get of the Christ, as He walked in Judea and Galilee—His tender sympathy with the poor, and distressed, and afflicted. Remember His burning anger, how it flamed white-hot against mere "religiousness," and the awful condemnation He pronounced on its votaries. Consider how He made the people's sorrows *His own*; how He "bare their sicknesses, and carried their infirmities"; how He suffered *with* the people, weeping in the presence of death, which came by sin; how He received the despised and the outcast with open arms, making them His friends, soothing their tortured souls with His love and forgiveness. Think of Him, often homeless, and on one solemn occasion even friendless, practising what he preached (it sounds poor praise for Him, but it is a rare virtue), giving His life for the life of the world. Read how His Apostles and Prophets followed in His footsteps, how they gladly became the offscouring of all things for the sake of Him, and of those for whom He died—how they rejoiced when

they were counted worthy to suffer for His sake, and in turn gladly laid down their lives "for Christ and the Church."

Then let us ask ourselves whether the system which, in this country, calls itself pre-eminently "the Church," bears as a whole any likeness to Him they call Lord, whether it can possibly be in the spiritual succession, whether it is conceivable that it is His representative; whether, in fact, as an institution, it bears any resemblance at all to what He came to establish. If not, and if we seek for Him, let us turn away from the system, and turn to Him. Turn away from our pastors and masters, if need be, and turn to God.

Since writing what precedes, we have come across the following by a British writer who makes it his business to champion the aristocratic class and tradition. It is only one man's opinion, and therefore by no means a conclusive justification of our strictures, but it shows at least that another observer, from an entirely different point of view—that of hatred for "the masses"—has come to much worse conclusions than the writer, though that observer *rejoices* in the antipathy of ecclesiastical dignitaries to the common people.

"A healthy sign of the times is the de-Christianizing, if I may use the word, of the Church of England. Charity, pity, help to the oppressed—the first virtues of Christianity—are clearly absent in the Established Church of this country. A few isolated clergymen deplore the manner in which the Church is 'getting out of touch with the people,' i.e. they deplore the fact that the Church is assuming a saner, more pagan, and hence more beautiful aspect. . . . Our clergy instinctively feel that they simply cannot degrade themselves by coming into contact with the populace. All the protests of a few Low Church parsons cannot force the great body of the Church proper to take an interest in 'the masses.' . . . The Church of England, then, despises the masses, inwardly, and very often outwardly; but it nevertheless has an outlet for its energies. Where? Among the

aristocratic classes; among the members of that class peculiar to England, the 'gentlemen.' It is to the English High Church party, represented in politics, broadly speaking, by the House of Lords and the Conservative members, that we must look to take up the study of Nietzsche and the propagation of his doctrines throughout the Empire."¹

If we are prepared, as suggested, to turn away from our pastors and masters, if need be, and turn to God, where shall we find Him? The reader may possibly be expecting here the recommendation of some rival institution, or the introduction of some new movement. If the reader does so expect, then we have failed to make our message clear. We have had enough of organizations and of movements; we need now a movement of the heart towards God. Every other "movement" which might be prescribed as a remedy will only put our consciences to sleep, by making us think we have done something, when really we have done nothing which alters the position a single iota. Neither is there any organization entitled to special recommendation. No greater snare can be laid for people than to recommend to them some body which professes to have "the truth." Christ is the Truth; He is the monopoly of no sect or party, but is to be known and had of all who seek Him honestly where He may be found—in His Word, the Scriptures of Truth. Look there for Him, and not to men.

One cause of the barrenness of most religious organizations is that they are chiefly occupied with getting people to join them. The churches are seeking more strenuously than ever to add to their numbers (and decreasing in numbers every year). Consciously or unconsciously, the churches are occupied with *themselves*, making self the object. But the Church was not set on earth to get, but to give—not to grow fat, but to work, leaving God to add souls to it. Not to secure people's bodies, and get names on their registers, but

¹ J. M. Kennedy, *The Quintessence of Nietzsche*.

to save the people. The present attitude, perhaps unwittingly, encourages the delusion which lurks unsuspected at the back of the mind of many a communicant and church member, that the fact of being a member in some way makes them all right with God. They confuse the registers down here with the Books up there.

Even in the Free Churches, where the question of personal relationship with God is supposed to be more insisted on, there can be no doubt that many are sub-consciously relying on their church membership. A gentleman once felt impelled to speak to a lady on personal religion. She was very shocked and offended. "If you go into that vestry," she said, "you will find my name on the register. I have been a member here for twenty-five years." "Indeed, madam," he replied, "but supposing you had a fire, and the vestry were burnt, and the register burnt too, what then?"

And many will be equally shocked and offended in the day when Christ raises the same question. How pained and surprised they will be, as they present themselves confident and smiling before Him, to see no response in His eyes.

"And what is your name?" He asks.

"Why, you remember me, Lord. I am A—— B——."

But He only shakes His head.

"Surely, you must be forgetting, Lord. Why, of course, you know me. I have been a church member for forty years."

"Have you any credentials?"

"Dear me! How foolish of me to forget them. But it surely cannot matter. I am A—— B——, of Blank Street Church. I laid one of the stones. You can see my name there." And—as the tears start to the eyes—"You *must* know me, Lord."

But again He shakes His head—and tears are in *His* eyes, too.

"I am sorry. *I do not know you.*"

3. THE INCUBUS.

Much of the talk we hear about putting the churches right is the merest trifling, and shows no sense of what the plagues that afflict them really are. We need to "stop this fooling," and to get down to the facts—to drop all our "schemes," and attend to our moral condition. But people have a terror of facts, and will do anything to head you off from them. They will even confess imaginary faults, to keep you from putting your finger on the real ones; which accounts for a good many of the weird pronouncements we hear as to "what is wrong with the churches," and the still more weird remedies proposed. There seems a fear lest, if the real issue were raised, and dealt with fearlessly, it might in some cases even lead to the shutting up of a church. But surely, in such a case, the disappearance would be an unmingled blessing. The law in Israel was, when a house was infected by leprosy, to take away the infected stones, scrape away the mortar, and cast them out of the city. If that proved ineffectual, the house was to be *broken down*, and every vestige of it cast forth. Which thing is also a parable.

Apart from very occasional disclaimers, it is generally recognized that the churches are in a pretty bad way. It is admitted at every ministerial gathering, and in every religious paper, and commented on without any reserve by the world at large. Decreasing numbers, declining power, loss of reputation and influence, alienation from the life of the people; preachers not knowing what they believe, congregations caring as little; and a growing conviction among large masses of men that the whole thing is insincere.

What is wrong with the churches? We cannot reproduce here some of the things that are said about "religious" people by the less squeamish of their opponents, because it is often couched in language which is both vulgar and profane; but it is useless attempting to disguise the fact that in some cases these charges,

brutal as they are, are justified, and are causing religion to stink in the nostrils of those who judge it by its most insincere professors. And these are the things that are never mentioned in all the perturbed assemblies in which the state of the churches is discussed.

One of the most potent causes of the present unhappy state of things has been the unholy pursuit by the churches of money, show, and worldly influence, to say nothing of the pursuit of these things by individual members, some of whom have used the churches for this express purpose. The orgy of church building and organ buying which has been indulged in during the past few decades has been accompanied by every objectionable feature, and the fatal fruits of such practices are now being reaped in full measure. It is a significant fact that all this material activity has synchronized with the decline in moral and spiritual power, as well as in numbers, which the churches are now lamenting, though this great "forward movement" was looked upon as a sign of vigorous growth and healthy expansion. Some churches which were doing a good work have forsaken the centres in which they laboured, moved into front streets, erected showy, but often shabby, buildings, with gaudy and distracting interiors, which leave everything to be desired from the artistic point of view. In many cases the choir, from which the young people can smirk at their friends in the body of the building, has been made the central show of the edifice, rivalled only by the organ-front, which dominates the place with crushing effect, and whose dummy pipes drive one to distraction as the preacher bobs about in front of them.

The patronage and money of the wealthier people have been sought after, and the poor and faithful members of the original congregation cold-shouldered, though lip-service has never ceased to be paid to them; and they have in many cases retired disheartened from the scene. Where the older members have died off, the children have not come along to fill their places, for the old spirit and enthusiasm are no longer there to attract

and inspire them. The new churches are dead and dreary; the distracted pastor has in many cases given up preaching from his heart and his book, and is trying one thing after another, as his blatant announcements show, to get or to keep a congregation, like a struggling tradesman trying to catch the popular taste by constant changes in his window-dressing and advertisements. He alternately scolds and coaxes his members to second his efforts more strenuously, and many are the differences of opinion between him and them as to whether the failure to "make things go" is his fault or theirs. It is costing a good deal more money to do a great deal less of effective work; interest on the debt incurred has to be met, and is not easily forthcoming. The debt itself has to be repaid, and his constant appeals for the wherewith to do this are resented by the congregation, while the efforts they make to raise money from outside, and so get their debts paid for them, are unedifying in the extreme.

The writer has no preference for back streets, or "Little Bethels"; in fact he would like to see the church campaigning on a scale which would make the Kaiser's schemes look small; but there has often been an unworthy motive, and a wrong object in view, and consequently the wrong things have been done. It has been largely a matter of seeking front seats for their own glorification and profit—seeking to make a place and a name for *themselves*. Had the churches sought first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, for themselves and for those for whom they cater, all these things, so far as they are desirable, would have been added unto them. But there has been no faith; belief in Christ's promise to provide the means for the work has been as lacking as faithfulness to His commands; and, with all the churches' professions, they have largely despised the poor of the flock, though they desire to keep them for the sake of a following.

"What do you want a new church for?" inquired a friend of the writer's, a local preacher, when asked

by a superintendent minister to assist in a grandiose project. "And why leave the neighbourhood where the church is doing a good work?" The answer given by the minister was that a good class of residence was springing up in the other direction, and a "good class of people" were coming to live there, and they wanted to secure them. "Yes," replied the local preacher, "you are after the rich people, and after their money, and the poor can go to hell for all you care." The minister was shocked, and perhaps the remark of the "local" was a little strong, but the truly shocking thing about it was that it was also a little true.

There is only too much reason to fear that many ministers have really an almost pathetic faith in money. One minister known to the writer was after nothing else—except *worse things*—while another had such a faith in it as would have been quite touching and beautiful, had it been faith in something better. The unction with which he even pronounced the word "money" was a proof of the place it occupied in his mind, and gave a terrible shock to a young friend who had expected something so different when admitted to an interview with "the minister."

We do not ignore the fact that most ministers, at least in the Free Churches, are miserably underpaid. We are not in favour of a paid ministry, but those who are ought to enable their minister at least to live on the same scale as the average member of his congregation.

Readers may have grave doubts as to the wisdom and propriety of our criticizing men in the ministry. "Whatever you write about others," they may say, "you might at least leave ministers of religion alone." But this would be the old game of throwing all the blame on the sheep, and saying nothing to the shepherds. Again, we make every reservation for all the good and noble men in the ministry; but as a rule it may be taken for granted that when so many of the sheep go astray, there is something wrong with the shepherds.

The attempts of the churches to get a "better class of people" have not proved an unqualified success. The

better-off members whom they did have, or their children, have drifted off into the Establishment, or spend their Sundays "week-ending," while such new members of this class as they have secured have in some cases exacted a heavy price for their patronage. The means taken to secure them are not such as would appeal to a really desirable type of adherents, and the churches have become infested with men who have axes to grind. The churches are being "used." Men who want to get on in the town find prominence in the churches a useful step to prominence in local life, with its consequent monetary opportunities. If they desire to appeal to the suffrages of the town, they find a strong nucleus of support ready to their hand in the congregation. These trustful souls will vote for them at local elections without question, believing they cannot go wrong in voting for one of their own members. When an acquaintance of the writer's declined to support a fellow-member's candidature it caused great consternation, and the minister called on him to remonstrate. Pressed as to the principles, and even as to the motives, of the candidate, he admitted everything. "But still," he said, "he is our own man, and I naturally assumed you would support him."

Being a well-known character at the local church or chapel, it is naturally assumed that such a man stands in some undefined way for "religion." He talks the jargon of his sect; and people do not realize that "Chapelese" is not necessarily the language of Canaan. If opposing parties call attention to his misdeeds they are dismissed as "socialists," a word which the religious people are taught to regard as equivalent to "atheists." He often belongs nominally to one of the more progressive of the political parties, but in practice, and in local matters, he is a reactionary, the recognized opponent of the local progressive elements, and a champion of private, as opposed to public interests; while his practices are often much worse even than his professions. His opponents refer to him without ceremony as being "on the make,"

and his doings are constantly cast in the teeth of any one who seeks to advance the faith of Christ.

When Sinbad the sailor had the Old Man of the Sea on his shoulders, after enduring much misery from him for many days, he at last found a short and sharp way of making him loosen his hold. There seems little prospect of the churches ridding themselves of the incubus whose legs are clasped so tightly around their necks. In the first place, they will not even make the attempt, for they foolishly imagine that he is necessary to them, whereas it is really they who are necessary to him. In the second place, the church is not free. In paying court to him, and assisting him in his designs, by according him a deference which they would not accord to a poorer man of the same spiritual attainments and character, they have given hostages to the enemy, and by every moral and spiritual law they have got to pay the penalty.

There is a class of old legends, of which "Faust" may be taken as the type, throughout which, though details vary in each legend, there runs one central idea. A man makes a bargain with the devil, the price being the same in each case, namely, the man's soul. In consideration of the devil procuring him unlimited riches, or renewed youth, or the love of a maiden, or whatever other thing he may have set his mind on, the miserable hero signs an agreement giving the devil the right to take his soul after so many years. When cast in the form of a play, the last scene usually represents the astuter party to the bargain coming to claim his own. He clasps the poor wretch in his arms, despite his shrieks of terror, and together they sink through the stage trap-door, from which clouds of sulphurous smoke are belching forth. But all these legends contain a fatal fallacy. In real life, the devil does not declare his terms. He is by no means such a gentleman as the old legends make him. He merely gets his dupes to accept his proffered help, assuring them that there is nothing to pay, and the man who accepts it and avails himself of

his services foolishly believes that the transaction is completed and done with. But *the price has always got to be paid*, as the victim learns to his cost. And many a church, too, has made a similar bad bargain. They have sacrificed their highest principles, and descended to lower ones, departed from the lines of faith and integrity, and obtained help by more than questionable means, not realizing who the sinister personage really was whose help they were accepting. And to-day many of them have paid the price—their soul. They may not know it, but their soul has fled; they have all the outward form of a church, but the spirit has departed. They have a name that they live, but they are dead.

The practice of “cultivating” the rich adherent is a flagrant and defiant infraction of the scriptural injunction. We are commanded that, if a wealthy man enters the church, and also a poor beggar, all tattered and torn, we must not pay the rich man more respect than the man in rags. It goes on to say that the poor man may be rich in faith, and an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven, and that rich men oppress us, and exploit the law of the land for that purpose. If therefore you have respect of persons, it concludes, you commit a sin which is as bad as adultery or murder. Presumably the idea is that you make yourself a partner in his doings. Yet this sin runs rife through the churches. By its means much of the money was obtained for the buildings. It is shared alike by pastor and people, though the former must be held the more guilty, for he is responsible as a shepherd to preserve his flock from the ravages of the wolves.

Another factor tends to complicate the situation, and makes it easier for the people to be misled. This is, that the men who are “using” the churches are not all conscious hypocrites. If they were they would soon be found out. Many an one of them is more or less acting up to such light as he has. He knows no better, and has never been taught better; the little light that is in him is darkness. He really thinks this sort of thing

is good enough for God. He has never been dealt with faithfully either by the minister or by the church, who have combined to flatter him, and to impress upon him how much the church is indebted to him, as, in fact, they really believe. Small wonder if in time he comes to think that God also is indebted to him. Is he not a supporter of the Lord's cause? If the connection pays him, is he any the worse for that? Nay, is not God even prospering him, causing his rents to go up, and giving him skill and cunning in his deals, because He is pleased with him?

Such characters are an intensely interesting psychological study, and the writer has watched them for years, but for the life of him cannot place some of them with any degree of certainty. There can be little doubt, however, that they range through every degree, from the comparatively honest man, who is just a little "keen" in business matters, and sees no harm in using his church connection, to the one who is out purely and simply for what he can get, and is "religious" because it pays. Among this latter class there sometimes exists a very terrible type. He does not really give to the church to any greater extent than the average poorer member, and yet manages to create the illusion that he does. He has the gift of making a little go a very long way. This type cannot work without the collusion of some of the more responsible members or officers. He has some power in the town, and is played up to by them for that reason. And the church is made to play up to him too. It sells its soul, but does not get the money.

How is this situation to be dealt with? We cannot excommunicate a man because he is a little wealthier than his neighbours, or because he is an owner of small house property, and interests himself in local matters. He may be all this, and be the finest Christian in the town. Neither can we shunt every man of whose moral and spiritual character we happen to have a poor opinion—he may have a poor opinion of ours. What we need

is a change in the whole religious atmosphere, leading to an entire reversal of the present accepted policy of the churches. This would bring about such a state of things as would automatically freeze out the undesirables, or bring them to repentance; it would force out the "leprous stones," and perhaps save the house. And every encouragement should be given to them, unless they will repent, to sever their connection with the communion. Unless the churches are prepared to revise their values, change their whole outlook, give up every practice and habit founded on worldly calculation and unbelief, and revert to the practice and habit of faith, the prospect is hopeless.

With such a change, however, a new atmosphere would pervade our churches, an atmosphere like that of Pentecostal days, the atmosphere of the Holy Ghost. In that atmosphere a hypocrite could not breathe and live. It was life and health to every sincere soul, but death to the hypocrite who attempted to breathe it, as the renowned Ananias found to his cost.

4. "BROTHER ANANIAS."

There is a popular idea that this celebrated character was a man who concocted some very ingenious and elaborate lie, and his name has become a byword by which to designate any man who is an adept in that art. But as a matter of fact it is not recorded that Ananias said a single word during the enactment of the whole tragedy connected with his name. All he did was to adopt a certain false pose. He pretended that he was of the same spirit as the others, and that he was joining in a movement in which he really had no part or lot. He doubtless brought a large monetary gift to the church. It was his own money, and, as he was told, he could have done what he liked with it, except use it for purposes of deceit. But, probably to gain some credit or advantage, he gave it to be understood that it was the whole proceeds of his property, though he had kept back part

of the price, and we know how the Apostle Peter dealt with him.

It would be interesting and, we believe, not irreverent, to attempt to picture the Apostle paying the deference to Ananias that would be paid him at the usual modern money-raising function. Imagine, if it were possible, the Apostle presiding at such a function, and rising to address the meeting somewhat after the following manner :

"We now come to an exceedingly important and interesting part of our proceedings. Kind friends and honoured brethren who have promised donations towards the very large sum which we have to raise for the support of the work will please bring up their purses, which I will receive, and the secretary will read out the amounts."

Loud and prolonged applause. As it subsides, the first donor brings up his purse. As each comes up, and the amount is read out, the applause is renewed. The order has been carefully graduated, so that the figures announced rise in a steadily increasing crescendo, and the audience begins to regret that it exhausted itself in clapping the earlier donors so loudly, and has no strength left to show its appreciation of the greater munificence of the later ones.

But the great piece of the evening is still to come.

"Mr. Ananias."

That worthy walks up. The audience is more or less in the know, and there is much suppressed excitement as he presents his purse.

"One moment, please. Do not go back to your seat till the secretary has read the announcement."

"One thousand shekels !"

The momentary pause has given the hands of the audience a little respite, and prepared the way for the tempest of applause which now re-echoes through the building.

"I am very glad to hear that applause. It shows me that this congregation knows how to appreciate the munificence of one who has always been a good friend to this church. Allow me to say, sir, that we are deeply

indebted to you; and the cause also is deeply indebted to you. Perhaps I am giving away a secret, but I must be permitted to mention—h'm—that we understand that this gift represents—er, practically—er, the whole proceeds of the sale of our brother's property. Come up on the platform, Mr. Ananias—let the people see you. Make way for Brother Ananias. This way, please. Permit me to shake your hand." And there he takes his seat for the rest of the evening.

The subsequent proceedings have lost their interest, however, and the meeting soon breaks up with the doxology. But, as they sing it, there is a confused impression in the minds of some of the audience that it is a hymn of praise to Brother Ananias.

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How different a scene is pictured in what really took place. The Apostle's wrath as he discerns the deception, his stern rebuke of the lie that has been enacted, the terror of the delinquent, and his sudden fall to the ground, as his spirit departs to stand in the presence of the God to whom he has lied.

And the audience? They carry him out and bury him. Bury him as a suicide is buried at the cross-roads. No minister conducts the service, for there is no service. And the people are spared the ordeal of hearing the non-existent virtues of the departed extolled, and held up as an example to the young men to follow.

5. EXAMPLES.

"The worst of Smith was, that he had no religion," said the secretary of an important secular association to the writer. "Now Brown is a religious man; you will find that he will be all right."

Here was a testimony from a hard-headed man of experience to the moral power of Christ's religion; how my heart leapt up! But it soon fell again. For I remembered, among others, the notorious Jabez Spencer Balfour,

the "religious" man whose depredations ruined thousands of his fellow men and women, and sent numbers to the asylum, the workhouse, or an untimely grave. And the only evidence I could find of the new-comer's religion was that he had made it his first business to join the local church.

Smith had given us considerable trouble, and in spite of the many desirable qualifications which he doubtless possessed, we had been compelled to part with him. But we soon found that Brown was to give us trouble of a different kind. In his case, the duties of his office were performed to everybody's satisfaction, but he evidently held the seventh commandment in scant reverence. The usual pleas were urged in extenuation—sudden temptation and the rest of it. But it was proved in court beyond the shadow of a doubt that he had pursued systematically, relentlessly, and shamelessly, to the scandal of the town, the sin by which he ruined two homes.

How is it that the churches can harbour such men as this? The number of churches in connection with which scandals have occurred, usually to be hushed up, is truly alarming. It is no answer to say there are black sheep in every flock; the point is that in many instances these men have obtained protection by hiding under the skirts of their church. We do not demand that the churches should have an absolutely impeccable record. It would require more than a miracle to ensure that no impostor should ever creep in privily unawares, or that no member should ever fall from grace; but were the general spirit and atmosphere of the churches such as might reasonably be expected, these cases would occur with the extremest rarity, and would be faithfully dealt with when they occurred. Neither of these conditions can honestly be said to obtain. There are few sincere and earnest people with any considerable experience of corporate religious life who have not known anxiety and distress, not only on account of some scandal connected with an occupant of pew or pulpit, but also

on account of the lack of straightforwardness and honesty in dealing, or not dealing, with the matter, especially if the individual concerned is of some standing. In such cases, there is usually a great rush to hunt up texts enjoining charitable judgment, which are bleated out with a wearisome reiteration, to the entire exclusion of those scriptures which give specific directions for dealing with such problems. Thus nothing is done; they trust to time for the matter to blow over; and if any one afterwards refers to it, the answer usually is that "the charge was never proved," coupled with a dark hint that the person involved will prosecute for libel any one who reopens the question.

"Never proved!" What decent man would let it rest at that, and not take steps to clear his character? And what church with a shred of zeal for the honour of Christ could rest without clearing its own and His name from reproach? Whether the individual concerned be guilty or innocent, the conscience of the church is defiled; and the younger members, who, of course, are not supposed to know about the affair, but with whom it is current gossip, are led to think that these things are not really so terribly serious after all. How can we expect these lads and girls to develop into ideal Christian men and women, born and reared as they so often are with these "spotted and ringstraked" characters constantly before their eyes?

And the people in the neighbourhood have one more reproach to fling at the Christians, and one more excuse for not being "religious."

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Among the members of the Free Churches are usually to be found some practical Christians with a lively sense of social justice. These men and women will interest themselves in movements for the healing and uplifting of their fellow men and women, and of their children. To them, such efforts are so manifestly in accord with the spirit and teaching of Christ, that in their innocence

and enthusiasm they expect the sympathy and support of the more powerful members in their church. But they find it impossible to get a move on them. Charitable organizations they do not object to, but social justice leaves them cold. On pressing the matter, the reformer is sometimes given to understand that it is a small thing to concern himself with the people's bodies and homes, their environment and wages, and the feeding and education of their children. "What the people need is Christ," he is told. This settles waverers, who might have been disposed to side with the practical Christian; and he now begins to find himself looked upon as a man who would rob the people of their rightful heritage in Christ, and offer them some spurious substitute. And yet he was trying to do the works of Christ.

"What the people need is Christ." God knows they need Him; but Satan himself never quoted a sublimer truth for more sinister purposes. Because they need Him, does that absolve me from giving them justice, so far as it lies in my power? Does it absolve me from showing them the love and mercy and compassion that He enjoined? If I profess to prize Christ so highly, how comes it that I am so much more ready to impart Him than to part with my worldly advantages, or to do justice with them?

Let us suppose that a proposal is made to give men in the employ of the municipality a living wage, or to pull down insanitary and indecent dwellings, and to erect others where light and air may enter; where the children may not die off like flies, and may live in some semblance to human beings, instead of like obscene animals in their lairs. And suppose also that I am an owner of small house property, and am on the council to look after my interests. To improve the water-supply, to clear the infected area, to build healthy homes for the people—and to pay fair wages for the work—this would mean an extra threepence in the £ on the rates; quite a considerable sum on my thirty or forty rate-compounded cottages. I cannot put up the rents again

to repay myself, for I have only just squeezed them up to the last pinch. Besides, some of my cottages are none too salubrious, and they may be condemned. I must oppose the measure. And if the more progressive members on the council get too obstreperous, in the last resort I can always call them "godless socialists." That will do the trick.

Does my conscience twinge at all? It does not seem to; for I go straight from the council to the class meeting and open the service with prayer. I begin with a general confession that "we may have become defiled, since we last met; by contact with the world." I do not mention how much I may have defiled the world, though my dirty finger-marks can be seen in half the affairs of the town.

And no one laughs—or cries—but many fervently ejaculate their Amens.

I am extra fervent that night in my prayers for the poor, that they may find Christ. And I propose another mission to them, and guarantee the expenses to the extent of one guinea. It is much cheaper, and will do the people more good.

True, Christ said some severe things in a similar connection, which unkind people might twist and apply to me; but that was to the Pharisees.

6. "WHAT THE PEOPLE NEED."

Whatever be the motive with which it is said, it yet remains true that what the people need *is* Christ. Not only the poor—the whole world needs Him. Without Christ and His message we drift rudderless, chartless, without compass or guiding star, across the trackless sea of life to the unknown ocean of the future. And the terrors of that ocean are rendered the more appalling by the wrecks that have strewed the path of our voyage hitherto, and by the ghosts of our dead that still cry to us from the unquiet waters.

Christ offers Himself to all who will receive Him—to

every nation and to every man and woman. He is not the property of the ecclesiastical system; He is the *people's* Christ. Let the people claim Him—*Him*, not the system which has accreted round His name.

You are heartsick and disillusioned. You have begun to doubt if there is any good thing. You need the Christ. Brush aside everything and everybody that would obscure your gaze, and look at *Him*; close your ears to the clatter and clamour, and hear *Him*.

The passionate admiration of the workers for whoever may be the leader of the moment amounts sometimes almost to a religion. It is not altogether to be wondered at; we must have something—some one—to worship, and we worship the best we can find. Our idol is shattered before our eyes, and after a time we turn to another, too often, alas, to undergo again the same process of disillusion. This has been the experience of many a worker. One after another, leaders have disappointed him; they have led him nowhere. And to-day he believes in nothing. Soured, sullen, disillusioned, his thoughts are inspired more by the instinct of revenge than by hope of improvement, and his leanings tend to gravitate towards anarchy—the peril of the age. Let this instinct once become uppermost, and the prospect before us will be as hell compared with the purgatory we have passed through.

Sometimes it is the workers who disappoint the leaders. It has been said of Savonarola, the great Florentine reformer, that when he said to the people of Florence "Be free," they applauded him, but when he said "Be pure," they stoned him. The day may come when your leader has to tell you some home truths concerning the things that are keeping you back. While you hesitate between conviction and resentment, your enemies will suddenly develop a passionate regard for you and your reputations. They will work themselves into a frenzy against him for "slandering the workers." They will resort to their time-honoured device of finding a name for him—Boloist, Pacifist, Bolshevist—it does not matter

• what, so long as it is false. They will not reason. Why should they? You do not think, and you will not think, and these gentry know it; and they will hoot this name after him, knowing that you will be carried away by the hooting, get it in your brains, and finally join in it. When you refused to carry Mr. Arthur Henderson to Paris, because he was "carrying on his work with German money," they were not your friends who told you that lie, yet you weakly did their will.

You have been told that Christianity has failed. This is false, by the way, but let that pass; I am not offering you Christianity, but Christ. You *know* that you have no complaint, no reproach, against *Him*. When you find fault with "Christianity," you are finding fault, not with Him, but with people who profess to follow Him, but do not. No one *can* find fault with Christ. In Him, as set forth in those four little books, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—which you should read, by the way—we have the record of a life which is unassailable. This is why the writer, a worshipper of the Christ, has not hesitated to subject the system that bears His name to criticism and exposure. Let all that calls itself Christian—and let Christ Himself—be submitted to the most ruthless examination; let the verdict on the system be what it will; Christ Himself only emerges from the scrutiny more splendid, more glorious, more perfect.

The writer has been through too much in his life to care any longer for anything but realities; and Christ alone remains, supreme, transcendent, as the one Reality, the hope and anchor of his soul. As a plain man to plain men, I tell you I would a thousand times sooner die ere finishing this sentence, than lose Him, and all He means to me.

You have been told that the world needs a new religion. A good deal of this talk is the mere babble of people who, having nothing of their own to say, repeat what some one else has said. It is to be an "ethical religion"—a religion of all the virtues. Did you ever reflect on the fact that there is no virtue that ever has been or

ever can be conceived by the human mind which was not already practised and taught by Christ? *There is not a virtue outside Christianity.* There are no virtues but Christian virtues. Think of one; challenge the world with all its philosophers to produce one. Find one single virtue that is outside the life and teachings of Christ, and you have found an imperfection in Christianity, and, by implication, in Christ Himself. Till you can do this, I cling to my Saviour; my heart is at the very source of things; I have in Him that which, by the very nature of the case, can never be surpassed—the fount of all goodness and wisdom—God’s last word to man.

What can this new religion amount to—this “religion of humanity”? At best it can be merely an emasculated version of Christianity, in which the compilers must betray in every line their indebtedness to Christ. A piece of unconfessed plagiarism—a Christless Christianity, with no apologies to Christ. And how will you set about carrying it out? It sounds easy; according to its sponsors it calls for no special knowledge or understanding; it is to be a purely “practical” religion, independent of creeds—a simple teaching to be good. Why, then, have you not practised this religion long ago? Christ has not stopped you. There is nothing in the religion of Christ that has prevented you from doing all the excellent things in this “religion of humanity” which is going to do so much for the world. How is it then that we still see practised all the sins that have brought the world to its present pass—with some new ones added—and from which, I understand, even the great working class is not entirely free?

Doubtless this new religion will in due course furnish a promising “stunt” for the “noisepapers,” but if you yield to it you will find you have been taken in yet once again. It will merely be one more attempt to get rid of Christ, whose religion *is* the religion of humanity, and of all the virtues.

Or perhaps your hopes are rather fixed on a revolution;

you and your class hope to take a hand in governing the country.

But are you fit to rule ?

"As fit as the present ruling classes," is the reply which may be vouchsafed.

But, if that is all, you offer us a future as full of error and of disaster as our past. Yet this is probably beside the point, for you are not likely to get into power as a result of a revolution. Do you know what happens even in a "successful" revolution ? Those who are up get put down, and, perhaps, some of those who were down get up. But it is far more likely that the usual thing will happen ; cunning watchers of the game will exploit the new conditions to get on top, while you who have shed your blood get nothing—except to become the victims of the new rulers. The French Revolution was followed by Napoleon, and by the era of the greatest wars in history. I propose to you a revolution in which you can surely win, if you have the will ; take Christ, and make Him your King. It is idle for you to sneer at "Christian England" ; if England is not Christian, make it so. Do *you* begin, and become the good seed of the new revolution.

Why not set about studying the question ? Get a New Testament and read it, privately and in classes ; appoint committees to study and report. Discuss freely the following questions : (1) Would it be a good thing for the workers if this country became a really Christian country ? (2) Would the fact of the workers becoming Christian tend to this end ? (3) Would it be a good thing *in any case* for the workers to become Christian ?

And, according as you find, so do.

Yet do not imagine that you can take Christ as a kind of political leader, merely making Him your champion against those whose instincts and interests you believe to be opposed to your own. You cannot be a follower of Christ as one is a "follower" of Marx, or Herbert Spencer. Christ will not permit Himself to be "used," and you have complained bitterly enough about others

using Him. If a Christianity without Christ is a mockery, Christ without Christianity is impossible. If ~~we~~ we accept Christ we must accept all that He is; if we believe in Him we must believe His teaching; if we call Him Lord we must do *the things that He says*.

It is proved to demonstration that the religion of Christ can save the world, and it ought to be clear to all by now that nothing else can save it. Your troubles arise through living in—and being part of—a practically non-Christian civilization, a civilization which will go from bad to worse unless there is an awakening to righteousness, a revival of conscience towards God, and an honest response to the message of Christ. Why do you not take the first step towards making your country truly Christian? When you come to look into the matter you will find that Christ has His conditions—which you must settle with *Him*. If you refuse, the world is inevitably destined to unspeakable catastrophe and horror, and you or your children will pay the penalty. But, if you *do* refuse, *never blame Christianity again*.

7. A FINAL WORD TO THE CHURCHES.

It is possible that we are the first to offer in plain language the true answer to the question “What is wrong with the churches?” Using the word “moral” in the inclusive sense in which we have used it throughout, what is wrong with us is—*our moral condition*. If this condition remains unchanged, and if there should be a great movement of the Spirit of God among the people, it will take place independently of the churches; they will see themselves cast aside like a used rag.

If once that Spirit commences to move in the spirits of men; if hearts begin to be stirred, and consciences exercised, about *realities*, can it be expected that they will turn to the churches, as things are? Consider what the masses know of the churches at present. They see the lives of church and chapel goers; they read the often futile pronouncements that are made by ecclesiastical

dignitaries from time to time. They do not attend ordinary services, but, as a result of extra efforts and advertising on the part of the churches, they are sometimes induced to attend special functions—recognitions, farewells, presentations, and public meetings in connection with a church's various festivals and anniversaries, etc. These are seldom directed to doing good to the people, but more often to self-advertisement and money-raising; and many of the visitors stigmatize the proceedings after they leave as "back-scratching."

A struggle goes on for years to get rid of a minister, and, when it has at length succeeded, and the final meeting comes, one after another gets up to say how dearly he is loved. They talk of his "call"—well knowing it was really a push—and trust that his great spiritual gifts will find an even wider scope in the sphere to which he is taking them. He makes a speech in a similar strain about the men who have secured his extrusion, and who very often have been none too particular about their methods; *and all the neighbourhood knows the facts*. It is not suggested that they should publish broadcast all the circumstances when these are of an unhappy nature; but at least they might let him go quietly, and not invite people there to tell them fairy tales. Christ taught us very plainly that "receiving honour one of another" is a symptom of infidelity, yet public meetings of churches reek with this type of thing. Even votes of thanks are made the occasion for flattery and falsehood. Ministers especially combine to flatter one another in public; it is sad to see how even good men sometimes seem to consider this a part of their duties. Their motives may be laudable, but it makes a decent man want to hiss. And it is a stench in the nostrils of a holy and righteous and *serious* God—a God who deals in realities. Let those who want this sort of thing form a mutual admiration society, but let those who are Christ's preach Christ.

Instead of dealing with the real evils, great talk is being made about getting "abreast with the times."

The impression is almost conveyed that it is necessary to drag along a laggard God to keep pace with this poor world. Reliance is being placed on organization and new methods. Much is hoped for from coffee suppers and ten-minute sermons. Above all, feeling their individual weakness, the churches are proposing to combine for strength. In an enormous number of cases individual churches are divided within themselves, rent and torn by internal jealousy and intrigue, each section playing for its own hand. Surely the causes of these evils should be dealt with first, for, so long as they exist, it hardly seems honest, by an act of external union, to try and persuade the world that they are one. And the joining together of these weak elements will only make a big, but utterly feeble and flabby organization—a sick giant.

The rage for reunion as a remedy for existing evils indicates a very poor judgment as to what those evils are. The period in which the churches have declined so tragically has *not* been a period of division—the tendency has been slightly in the opposite direction—therefore we must look elsewhere for the prime cause of the decline. Division is deplorable, but the call to-day is not—firstly, at any rate—to adapt ourselves to each other, but to adapt ourselves to the one perfect standard; to learn what God is like, and to adapt ourselves to *Him*. The divisions which gave birth to the Reformation and to the Free Churches at least had life in them. The new and artificial organization which it is proposed to weld out of the *débris* of the Nonconformist bodies will have no more real vitality than Empire Day.

And one word of practical warning on this question of reunion, a warning that may be learnt from the melancholy fate of the Young Lady of Niger. Any scheme of so-called union or partial union of the Free Churches with the Establishment will only be brought about, in the present temper, at the cost of the former being swallowed alive by the latter. The smile will be on the face of the tiger. Even in so far as they are already acting together it is largely on these lines. The “Church”

is profiting by the weakness of the Nonconformist bodies. In the various "united services" it is usually evident that "the Church" is the thing, with the others playing a very small second fiddle. In the villages, the deference of the chapel parson and the tolerant patronage of the vicar are combining to de-class the chapel and its adherents. The present attitude of Free Church ministers and officers, in many instances, looks like a betrayal of the cause. There seems to be a well-grounded fear that their standing and influence are slipping away, and a craven desire to lay hold on the skirts of an organization which, from a worldly point of view, is so much more securely established. That church is not giving anything away; it will never accept any *rapprochement* with the Free Churches which does not tend to increase its own influence and that of the class for which it stands. Yet in the present desperate state of mind of the Free Churches they may go so far as to give up everything for "recognition," or, as they would put it, for the sake of peace. But, if they would escape the fate of the simple-minded Russians, let them remember the Peace of Brest-Litovsk.

A very ugly symptom has been betrayed from time to time, which confirms our idea that the motive underlying the "reunion" proposals is the desire to regain influence; that is, that some of our religious leaders seem anxious to put their hands as soon as possible into the bloodstained hands of the German pastors. In some cases this may merely arise from that fuddled conception of "Christian charity" to which we have already referred, and from the inexcusable assumption that all professional religionists must be Christians, no matter what their deeds may be. But in any case we—the people—have got to prevent it. "After all," they say, "they are our brethren, and *we have got to work with them.*" But we must see that they do *not* work with them, or at least that they do not work off their combined energies on us. To do them justice, we do not believe that our ministers are "brethren" to the German pastors—those murderers of women and children. Yet a man is

known by the company he keeps, and if our religious leaders succeeded in persuading us that they were in any real spiritual sense the "brethren" of the German pastors, then we might think it time we got the handcuffs on our men.

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A final word for the reader and for the writer. Practically every one in the churches "deplores the state of the churches." It follows that "deploring" is no sign of grace. Inasmuch as all deplore, it is evident that the people who are the cause of the deplorable state must be among the deplorers. It is conceivable therefore that he who writes these things, or the reader who agrees with them, may be among those for whose sake God is hiding His face from the churches.

"Verily," says Christ to us, "some of *you* are betraying Me!"

Lord, is it I?

Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

VI

THE NIGHT

I. THE GATHERING BLACKNESS.

WATCHMAN, what of the night? What vision of coming blackness is seen on the horizon?


Hope may tell a flattering tale, believing that already it perceives the first faint beams of the rising sun of universal peace. Prophets who would fain believe what they prophesy may be preparing to herald the new day for which our souls are yearning. But what are the *signs*? What are the facts and tendencies? It is these we must watch—deeds, not words; it is these we must seek to interpret, and not the mere professions and hopes of the times. Setting aside mere words and intentions, gazing honestly and fearlessly on facts alone, on what can we base any hopes that the sun of universal brotherhood will ever shed its healing beams on us or our children?

Let the reader who ponders these things call to mind all he has observed during the war. Let him remember even the things he has himself said, the judgments he has passed on the actions and motives of his fellows. You are hoping that something good will come out of it all. But what is your estimate of things as they *are*? Can you see around you the elements out of which the good time is to come? What have you thought and said about the various manifestations of human nature during this revealing period, about profiteering, for instance, about the wisdom and singlemindedness of governments, past and present? Have you never charged people and classes with self-seeking under the cloak of patriotism?

What are your views as to the devotedness and singleness of aim generally of the commercial classes, and of the workers? Do *you* think we have improved as a nation during the war? Are we more unselfish, just, serious, earnest, tender of heart and conscience? Is there greater integrity of character and aim than in 1914? If truth constrains you to a negative answer, are you doing yourself justice as a thinker in assuming that good will automatically come out of the war? Are you not expecting sweet water from a bitter well? If the war has *not* had a purifying effect, is it not more reasonable to assume that the old elemental passions, unchastened, unrepented of, will continue to sway us as of yore, with the old fatal results, increased beyond all measure by the new problems which face us?

It may sound like talking theology if we speak of "the human heart." Yet every logical man must realize that it is there the change must take place if there is to be any change. Apart from creation, everything that exists, or may exist, from a music-hall to a League of Nations, has its origin in the human heart. We are casting no reflection on the devoted efforts of good men and women who have laboured to improve our institutions, when we say that all efforts towards reform which do not touch the heart and conscience are fated to barrenness so far as regards any permanent fruit. Such laws as have been passed in recent times for the amelioration of our social life, as well as our altruistic agencies and institutions, have largely been addressed to lopping off the excrescences that have appeared from time to time in a given state of society. And experience teaches that ere long others appear in their places, calling for fresh laws, fresh philanthropic activities. We are always a decade or a generation behind. We never catch up with the evils we seek to deal with. Our existing social legislation at any given moment is always that which was passed to deal with abuses which appeared under the previous laws, and it is, and must be, as full of loopholes as those. Once the new institutions get into working order, a new set of

conditions is set up ; astute, self-seeking men find and avail themselves of opportunities for exploiting the new conditions as they did the old. Additional laws are passed to circumvent these machinations, until our statute book becomes of baffling volume and perplexity, and still the vicious wheel goes round.

It might conceivably be possible to enact legislation which would strike somewhat nearer the root, but if this is ever attempted it is defeated by men who are in both Houses of Parliament for their own ends, and those of their class. Their parsons never charge them with their sin, never threaten them with the judgment of God ; such conscience as they might have had by the light of nature has been blunted by class breeding and privilege, or by the commercial atmosphere which they have breathed, and, like some other sad characters we read about, they "know not what they do." The result is that, at best, such attempts at legislation result in mere bargains, in which two opposing interests each receive a bribe at the expense of the public good, and, which is much more serious, at the expense of the public conscience. Opportunities are created for the abler spirits among the oppressed classes to rise—and they join the oppressors. Devoted and merciful men and women organize to gather up the wreckage of society, with their refuges for the outcast young, and their homes for the fallen—and leave a clearer field for the wreckers. Thousands of people subscribe to such institutions with that comfortable feeling that comes from the belief that they are "doing good," subconsciously thanking the dispensation of an all-wise Providence which has provided such a convenient means for the exercise of their benevolent virtues ; but the thoughtful man subscribes with a feeling of heartsickness and hopelessness ; for he knows that we are largely allowing the enemies of society to do as they like, *while we clear up after them* ; and it is like sweeping up leaves on a windy day.

And one class cannot point the finger at another. Our sympathies are naturally with the "bottom dog," but

there is little indication that there would be any improvement if he were on top. We hear constant stories from the enemies of the workers of the depravity of the working classes, and these in their turn retort with a pertinent "tu quoque." From no class do we hear the confession, "*We* have sinned." And so it arises that schemes of reform favoured by one section of the community usually consist in proposals to make the others do their duty.

There seems no general awakening to the significance of this state of things, no repentance or promise of amendment; yet such an attitude of moral and intellectual dishonesty debars all prospect of deliverance from the evils which were growing in intensity before the war, and all hope of security against the continual recurrence of war itself. Nay, we may be *certain* that wars will recur apart from a change of heart, in spite of all international arrangements which may be made to prevent them. It is not possible that a League of Nations, or any other device, will of itself be sufficient to save us from the natural outcome of our habit of thought and life.

Any mere attempt by force to adjust the standing evils of such a state of society, or to curb the terrible power of money in the hands of the unscrupulous, is manifestly foredoomed to failure so far as regards the establishment of a happier régime on any secure and permanent foundation. We have been living in a state of social war one with another, and we know the value in war of pacts and treaties which are the result of diplomacy or pressure, or of the manœuvres of one party to get the better of another. Laws or arrangements so arrived at, so soon as the worsted parties see their chance, will be treated as "scraps of paper." Brave words are being spoken about what the labour party is going to do. Labour will insist upon this, and have its say about that, and generally take the helm that has been so long in the hands of others. Socialism, always too prone to believe that all will be well if only we divide the jam equally, is straining after the power to take a hand in

the division. Yet could the conditions desired be imposed for a time on those who at present hold the advantages, could all our institutions be changed, so long as we ourselves are unchanged it is contrary to reason and experience to look for any true and permanent amelioration of man's unhappy lot. There must be a real revulsion of heart ; classes and individuals must learn to condemn the *thief* instinct in their hearts, and to loathe possessions and advantages gained or held at the expense of others. We must realize that the passion for getting and having, hitherto extolled as the legitimate motive for our actions, is bad—utterly bad. We must learn to recoil from the awful dishonour of working for our own interests at the cost of others. There must be a real burning passion to satisfy the rights of others—and by “ rights ” we mean their needs and legitimate desires, and not merely a living wage. We need to open our hearts to such a sense of the just claims of our fellow-man, such a desire for the joy of knowing he is happy as well as ourselves, that we shall be unable to rest, unable to look our brother in the face, till those claims are honourably discharged. Our readers would doubtless feel very uncomfortable at meeting a man whom they had defrauded in business—assuming they could be guilty of such an action—and once our eyes are opened to our present sin we shall feel just as uncomfortable at meeting our fellow-man in the street so long as our debt of love and justice to him remains undischarged.

Of course we do not deprecate legislation and organization. A change of heart such as we desire will not lead each man as he receives his wages to give them to a poorer man than himself. It will lead to a state of mind which will inform and inspire all our legislative and other measures, and the juster laws and institutions which would ensue would not only be written on the statute book, nor our League of Nations be merely inscribed on parchment ; they would also be graven in the hearts of the people.

“ It is your iniquities,” says the prophet, “ that have

separated between you and your God." And it is our iniquities that separate us from one another. Until these are repented of the conflict will go on between individuals and classes and nations, with its inevitable results of heartburnings, resentment and retaliation, involving personal, social and national wars, with their long tale of broken and wounded and killed. The battle may sway now to this side, now to that, but there will be no victory, no peace, no rest, no progress. Our efforts to put things right by merely *forcing* on each other a re-arrangement of material conditions are dictated both by a misunderstanding of the nature of the problem, and by a desire to avoid the hateful task of dealing with *ourselves*.

But Labour will *not* win in such a struggle as we have contemplated; it will never master the forces inimical to the class whose interests it seeks to work for, though a "Labour" government for a time may be within the sphere of possibilities. If we take the whole working-class population, these form such an immense majority that they can have practically what they like, when they like. But on present lines they will never be united; they cannot be of one mind, for they are essentially heterogeneous in their ideals and aims, though their *true* interests are really identical. We would ask any enthusiastic Labour man who reads these pages to consider what solid grounds he has for any extravagant hopes. You get your men into Parliament, but you break away from them—or they from you. You get fresh leaders, and presently the elements which consider themselves the most progressive are opposing and reviling them. You are for ever discarding your head, and growing a new tail, and this process pleases your enemies immensely, for they can deal with the parts more easily than they could with the whole animal. Until you can infuse a little stability into the mass of your members—until these shall learn to act on a *principle*, which shall unify them—instead of being carried away by selfishness and sectionalism which differ in no way from the selfishness

of other classes, so long will you be kept down to the undignified rôle of causing disturbance, unrest and loss, and making brave speeches about the things you are *going* to do. What that unifying principle is we think we have already sufficiently indicated.

But think how many of the working-class population have nothing in common with your sentiments. We hear the butcher's man, the baker's man, or the brewer's man airing his lofty views on the Labour Party, and see him walking up in his lordly way to the polls to smash its candidate (and, incidentally, to smash himself), and vote for the man favoured by his employer, and the gentry whom he has the honour to "wait on daily." The great working-class majority is not represented by the few thoughtful and understanding "labour leaders" who have succeeded in impressing themselves on the attention and respect of the community. He is not *their* leader; many of them know nothing of his principles, and are constitutionally indisposed to make any mental effort to understand them. Often as not they are his avowed opponents, and their favourite literature consists of the newspapers which misrepresent and revile him.

Doubtless they are to be pitied, for they are fooled—shamelessly fooled—by the newspapers and interests which exploit them. But have they not themselves to blame? We do not suggest that any of the journals issued by those who strive for justice for the workers are perfect, but think of the small number of workers who are ever seen reading these compared with the vast crowd whose sole intellectual food is the *Daily Stunt*. If Labour were half so powerful as it imagines, and were the workers generally sympathetic with its ideals, it would be able to produce really good daily papers, with a first-class news service, which should wean the workers from the poisonous trash they fill themselves with. Spite of all that is sought to be done for the workers, the self-seeking interests still find it possible to attain their object of debauching and enslaving them by appealing to their levity, their selfishness, their vanity and their

passions and lusts. Appeal for their suffrages, on the score of righteousness and brotherhood, and it will be difficult to get a majority; urge them to be serious, to seek to learn the rights of the things which belong to their peace, and they will yawn in your face.

The popular belief as to the limits of fooling the people is erroneous. You *can* fool all the people all the time, or at least so divide them as to get a sufficient majority for your purpose, if you are only cunning and unprincipled enough to watch their moods from hour to hour—or *make* their moods—and bait your traps accordingly. Promise them something they think they want; turn their natural resentment against you on to some one else; work yourself into a white passion against the man who has spent his life in their service; call him Little Englander, Pacifist, Boloist—especially if you know it to be false—it will hurt him the more. Chew a piece of soap, that you may foam at the mouth as you denounce the scoundrel who would rob a poor man of his beer. There will be some who will know you for what you are; but you will get a sufficient majority to prove that *you* knew what *they* were—to justify the contemptuous estimate you had formed of them—fools, led away by their lusts, and enticed.

The games that are being played on the people to-day threaten the very existence of society unless their character is frankly exposed and faithfully dealt with. Is there any likelihood of this being done? Is there going to be an attack on real evil, on all that is false, as distinct from movements which represent individual or party interests, and which do not touch the root of the matter? Are there a sufficient number of good men and true, intelligent, singleminded, unselfish, to start and press a campaign for truth, for God and for righteousness, as distinct from mere religious or sectional interests? Is it still possible to move men in a cause which shall bring them no prestige, that will not provide a "stunt" for any newspaper, or increase its circulation? Are there yet men who fear God, who for His sake and their fellow-

men's will stand for righteousness, scorning, not only popularity, but even the notoriety that is to be got from championing some causes, even when they are not popular?

Are there yet men who, remembering the Spanish proverb, "He who would be a Christ must be willing to be crucified," are yet prepared to take the risk?

There is a call for men who will take a solemn vow in God's holy presence to seek to learn the truth, to give themselves up to the *love* of the truth, and consecrate their lives to following it, living it, and making it known. If such there be, God will give them enlightenment and understanding. And if—and *only* if—they follow faithfully and fearlessly the light as it is given them, He will lead them on from knowledge to knowledge, from understanding to understanding, and from victory to victory—victory, not for themselves, but for God and righteousness, and the peace which is the fruit of righteousness. Apart from God, it cannot be done. Things are too far gone. Nothing but a real movement of the Spirit of God can now save the world, and He cannot use any except such as are really given up to Him.

2. THE DARKEST HOUR.

Apart from such a change in heart and temper, what is the prospect? We will assume that we succeed in establishing the League of Nations, but we doubt if it will amount to much more than a glorified Hague Tribunal. The bigger scheme which has been proposed, if carried out logically and effectively, would involve the surrender by the various nations of practically the whole of their armaments to the League. The nations, while still having no safe grounds for trusting each other, would have to disarm and hand over their interests to the keeping of a third party. We should not criticize the idea of such an arrangement if the nations were ready for it—though then it would be unnecessary—but frankly we do not expect to see this miracle at present. We do not expect, for instance, to see Britain give up her fleet, her

aeroplanes, her guns or her munition factories, or to buy out and dismantle the works of the armament firms. Real peace depends on a state of heart, and, things being as they are, in spite of all that has been accomplished, we are after all up against the old nightmare of *an inconclusive peace*.

Even with a measure of general disarmament, a nation can so design its industrial machinery and organization that it can be diverted to war purposes when required, and it is impossible to prevent a secretive nation from doing this. The country which shall have perfected this "peace-war" organization most efficiently will have the same advantage over other countries in starting war that Germany had in 1914 with its large army and armaments. Unless the nations are to be prohibited from industry altogether, large installations of suitable machinery will be always in hand, ready to be turned at a moment's notice to warlike purposes. Drawings and specifications of standard weapons, and of sea and air craft, and supplies and formulæ for the manufacture of explosives and gases, will be in stock, enabling their possessors to turn these things out to standardized patterns in enormous quantities, and at the shortest possible notice. The increasing destructiveness of such wholesale disseminators of death will not make war impossible, it will make it possible only to the nation which sets them in operation first, without warning and without mercy. If it be suggested that the League, being armed, will "drop on" any nation which shows signs of so acting, we can only say we do not relish the prospect of a fresh "world war" every time a nation gives cause for suspicion. The other weapon with which it is proposed to arm the League—the economic weapon—is impracticable so long as nations and parties are seeking tariffs for their individual ends.

Salvation by pacts and treaties, or by any possible mechanism, is out of the question if there is no change of heart. Apart from Christ the world stands predestined to increasing misery. Yet the danger is that people will trust to such merely mechanical safeguards, and, once

the scare of the recent war is over, will settle down to live the old life again. Under cover of the fancied security, the old forces will continue to operate; the old play of self will work itself out to its natural and fatal end. The old rush for the gratification of desire will go on with the same panting eagerness. So long as getting and having, whether of wealth, position, or pleasure, are considered the worthy aims of man, so long will the old things be done, and bear the old evil fruits. Money, social distinction, pleasure, power, lust, will be the objects of an ever increasing competition. In their eagerness to exploit the continually growing desires of the community, caterer will compete with caterer, and pander with pander. The fierceness of the competition will lead capitalist to vie with capitalist in inventing and furnishing new lures for debauching the people, and the people to compete with each other in rushing into the nets spread for their feet. Bargaining between conflicting interests, instead of righteousness and Christian charity, will be the basis of our legislation, engendering increasing bitterness between class and class. In a world that is not governed by moral sanctions, injustice will increase and abound. Legislation can never heal the breach between capital and labour, which shows an ever increasing tendency to widen. Labour's seething discontent will lead to active and violent resentment, and issue in catastrophic conflict; and, in the midst of the confusion, the enemy may be among us ere we are aware.

Who will that enemy be? There is to-day a German population, including the German Austrians, amounting in number to more than twice the population of Great Britain, and occupying an enormous and continuous tract of country which represents practically the heart of Europe. We cannot prevent the recovery and development of this people. Even revolutions do not last for ever; a few years after the greatest and bloodiest revolution in history the French Republic developed into the greatest military empire in the world. For the League of Nations to attempt to suppress by force the develop-

ment of this people in any direction they might desire would be to precipitate the conflict which the League was established to prevent. The manufacture of aeroplanes cannot be permanently prohibited, as they will constitute part of the normal industrial development. It is out of the question to attempt to hinder chemical research and invention and manufacture. They must be allowed to develop their mercantile navy, and will do so whether "allowed" or not, and even if the building of additional war-ships is vetoed for a time the progress of invention may in a few years render the war-ship of to-day obsolete. And what of the possible invention of some new weapon, which shall render its users as far superior to their adversaries as the white men with their fire-arms were to the savages with their bows and arrows? Such weapon may be naval or aerial, projectile or chemical, while disease cultures can always be propagated and stored to any extent with the greatest of ease; these may include new and paralysing diseases at present unthought of.

Everybody will probably agree that these things are possible, but will the Germans give themselves to such objects?

The German nation as we have known it still exists to-day—they have shown no sense of sin, no shame, no sign of repentance. A man does not change his nature when his State changes its constitution. Some of the most devastating wars in history have been waged between *republics*. There is no satisfactory indication that the people who shocked humanity from 1914 to 1918 have experienced a change of heart. The view once held by many that evil rulers alone were responsible for the crimes of Germany is exploded. The people had doubtless been corrupted by their rulers, but the fact remains that they went mad with delight when war was declared; it was not the State's war, it was everybody's war. The gravity and solemnity of the hush that came over the people of Great Britain in those early days of August found no counterpart in Germany. The *people* set themselves, by their agents the soldiers, to over-run

their neighbours' territories—to burn and slay and steal—with the wildest delight. And when they learned that Britain would stand true to her engagements they went mad with a deadly, individual, personal hate. Lissauer's "Hymn of Hate" was sung throughout the land, and they set themselves deliberately, stolidly, systematically, *as a war measure*, to work up this hate against the people who had checked their game. To-day, bowing for the moment to the inevitable, they are seeking to make the best of things as they have turned out, but there must be Germans by myriads who would give their immortal souls—if they were any longer theirs to give—to be able to reverse history and the issue of the war, and to be burning and slaying among us to-day.

It used to be the delight of the Red-skins of North America, when they got news that a party of white settlers were absent on a hunting expedition, to steal upon their village by night, outrage and butcher their wives and children, and burn their homes. It is the emergence of this naked savagery that we are up against to-day, and that in a nation bursting with vanity concerning its civilization and "kultur." If such a people, under such rulers, give themselves as other nations have done to the thought of revenge, they will lay their plans with ten times more skill and cunning than before, and with a more artfully dissembled secrecy. No one knew their plans in 1914; their plans for the next war will be perfected under the veil of absolute darkness. Their only regret about the recent war is that they lost some forty-eight hours in complying to a certain extent with the usual preliminaries to civilized warfare. That "mistake" will not be repeated; never again will they "spoil their time-table" out of deference to the conventions.

There will be no quarrel, no negotiations, no declaration of war. At the signal, hell will be let loose upon us, and amongst us. In one night, when England has gone to bed in "peace and safety," the great crime will be perpetrated. They will come in such force, and with such strange weapons and processes, as to be able to laugh

at the usual British "preparedness." They will illuminate our cities with their searchlights, and pick out as in the daytime our governmental and strategic centres. A hail of fire and explosives, or some more terrible new invention, will destroy our nerve centres, and paralyse organization and command. During the years of "peace," elaborate schemes will have been perfected enabling them at a given signal to cut our cables, while their agents in this country, whether of German nationality or mercenaries of other races, may set themselves to carry out carefully prepared plans, by means of disease cultures, for poisoning the springs of life.

Isolated—except for wireless messages flying wildly into the ether—bewildered, cut off from her possible allies, it is not difficult to imagine England falling an easy prey, such resistance as she might be able to offer serving only as a pretext for the barbarities which would signal the enemy's advent. What that would mean let those consider who remember Belgium, Serbia, Northern France, and the other territories where the German soldiery have penetrated.

Should such a situation ever come upon us, people will be asking in consternation, Can there be a God, to allow such things? Would it not be wise to consider that question now, Can there be a God? Can it be that He is speaking to us? May it not be that we must render Him obedience in the day of prosperity if we would call upon Him in the day of trouble?

Can there be a God? How much of God has been seen in us in the events of our private and national life in recent times? Perchance it would be wise to listen to the words of One who declared that He came from God, and brought God's message to men. And in circumstances not morally unlike the present times He declared, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," a prophecy carried out to the full when the enemy came upon the guilty nation, and overwhelmed city and people in a night of such terrible blackness, that no ray of dawn has ever yet shone upon its gloom.

There are many at the present time who appeal to the words of Him who brought the message, and profess to tell us "when these things shall come to pass." This seems the very worst way possible of dealing with the warning. Doubtless God has His purposes fixed, and one day He will clear away the whole wretched system based on human government, which has proved such a frightful failure, and introduce a reign of righteousness under the sway of the only One who knows how to rule—the only One who ever ruled *Himself* perfectly. But He may bring this about in various ways. He may find in us when He comes friends who have been preparing themselves for that reign of righteousness, or enemies whom He will have to sweep away in His wrath before the world will be fit to live in. Our business is not with cunning calculations of dates and numbers, to try and discover times and seasons which God has kept in His own power, but rather, *because* no man knows that day or hour, to prepare ourselves now to meet our God, and to comport ourselves as we should if He were now visibly here.

The writer of these pages is no prophet, nor an interpreter of prophecies, but it seems clear to him that our business is to get on with well-doing—to "cease to do evil, learn to do well." The message of Christ to the age is not a matter of dates and numbers, and so to deal with it is largely to miss its point, and to muddle our poor brains when we ought to be exercising our hearts and consciences. For that message is a great appeal to the heart and conscience of Christendom. By its very wording, "Except ye repent," the warning, like some of the promises of God, is conditional. The future course of the world's history will depend on our response to the command to repent. God will take care of His own purposes, and infallibly bring His counsels to pass. But, if necessary, *He will change His plans*, and bring His immutable counsels to pass in some other way than that we are now forcing on Him.

VII

“DE PROFUNDIS”

1. WAR !

IN writing these pages, I have been animated by one motive—an overmastering desire for the blessing of my fellow-men, for the vindication of the truth, and the glory of God. The first of these is bound up with and dependent upon the last. Unless the will of God is done on earth, there is no prospect for men but ever increasing misery. If God's will is not done, the devil's will be. When will men understand that the devil hates them, and that every time he offers them a helping hand it is only to pull them down to hell? The brotherhood of men will never be realized except in the realization of the fatherhood of God, with all its implications. One conviction—one certainty rather—has forced itself upon me with increasing persistence as the years, and especially the last four years, have gone by; and that is the fact that man might at any moment rid himself of the evils that afflict him by returning to God. So self-evident is it to my mind that our disasters have arisen through turning our backs on Him, and might be remedied by our turning again, that I am amazed that we do not seriously consider the advisability of adopting this course, especially as everything else we have tried in the hope of extricating ourselves has only got us deeper in the mire.

What man *will* decide to do I do not know. I am sure only of God. Time was when I used to wonder how sure I was even of Him. Like many others, I used sometimes to indulge in the wholesome exercise of questioning my own faith. Like them, I had had my share of troubles, anxieties and disappointments in life, but in one thing

that really matters most I had had practically all that my heart craved for, and all I had prayed for. I had the joy of a family circle which gratified and rested my heart to the full. In everything we were one, and I was deeply conscious how dependent I was on my children for the joy of my life. If ever that circle should be broken, I asked myself, how would my faith stand the strain? Could I ever face life again? Some years ago, I believed for one short half-hour that one of my boys had been drowned. It was all a mistake, but in that half-hour I went through all that I could have gone through had it been true. Since that day the feeling has constantly increased that they were not only part of my life, but the greater part.

I believed in God. I trusted Him as the perfect Father revealed in Christ. But I sometimes asked myself how I knew that my faith was real. I had never been tried, except with the common trials that come to most men. Would my faith stand such a testing as has so often in history come upon men of faith? In the brave days of old, they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, met the fire and steel of the oppressor with a smile, and even endured to see their children testify for Christ by death. Could I stand if put to such a test? Poverty, perhaps, I might bear, for I had long been free of the popular delusion that a man's life consists in the things that he possesses; but the possibility of harm befalling my loved ones was a prospect I could not contemplate. It gradually dawned on me how difficult it was to distinguish how far I was resting in God, and how far in His blessings. And I was driven to confess to Him the weakness of my faith, and while praying that He might see good to spare them to grow up, and be all they promised to be, I prayed yet more earnestly for faith to desire only His will, and that that will might be fulfilled in us all, whether by life or by death, to His glory. To-day, all that I regarded as the worst has happened, and I am more sure of God than ever I was in those happy days before the blows fell.

On the 3rd August, 1914, I found myself unexpectedly in London. I had made plans which impending events seemed likely to upset. An irresistible attraction drew me to St. Stephens, where matters were being discussed of such overwhelming import for the future of the world. Thousands of others had been drawn by the same attraction. In Parliament Square, along Whitehall, clustering thick round the War Office, thronging Trafalgar Square, they moved or lingered, such a crowd as had never been seen before—tense, quiet, orderly. Like them, I neglected my business, buying each fresh edition of an evening paper every half-hour or so as the boys yelled the news, and never left till I read that the fateful die was cast that meant war.

War! Not such a war as we or our fathers had known, but *the* war. The war whose possibility or inevitability had been discussed for the past twenty years. The great war that some men had devoted the best years of their lives to trying to prevent, while others had devoted theirs to bringing it about. War that must rock the very foundations of society, and change the face of the world. I looked into the eyes of the young men as they passed by, and wondered as I looked on each whether in a few short months he would be lying dead on a European battle-field. I looked on the gay holiday attire of the women, and wondered how many of them would change it for the garb of mourning before another August bank holiday should come round. For I realized that this war was one in which the whole resources of the Empire would be put to stake. And in that evening I lived in imagination through what has actually come upon me in the years that have since passed.

2. "OUT OF THE DEPTHS."

What I have suffered in those years it is needless to say ; needless to tell to other parents the grief of a parent, which they already know to the full. Deep calls to deep, and heart answers to heart, and no words can tell

its bitterness. My three sons of military age, loathing war like the devil, offered themselves. The revulsion of sentiment, if it can be called a revulsion, which led these peace-loving lads to volunteer for war, is easily explained. They were simply satisfied that it was Britain's duty to adopt the attitude she did, and, that being so, they must not leave it to others, they must offer *themselves*. Of the two who were accepted, the elder one trained and fought, and kept continually in touch with home, till there came a long spell with no letters, and then an official intimation that he had been posted as “missing” after a certain engagement. For ten long months hope struggled against despair, till we had to admit the reasonableness of the presumption finally taken by the authorities that he had been killed. Then, as we meekly bowed our heads to the will of God, on a bright summer afternoon when everything spoke of peace, and our hearts seemed for a moment to have found rest, came the dreaded yellow envelope from the Field Post Office, with the news that the younger one had been struck by a shell, and breathed his last ere the day was out.

Death? I cannot believe in it. And I do not believe in it. The thought of them as they were brings to me, not some phantomy vision, but their warm, living presence, their very breathing, the light and love of their eyes, the friendly sound of their voices. I see them again at their work, their studies and their pastimes; I feel again the impact of their cheery good humour, their irrepressible spirits, their occasional nonsense, with never a wound in it, which all combined to make home home. That home, where they grew up, the home sanctified now by the blood of its sons, is filled with everything that speaks to me of them. Their rooms are unchanged, with the pictures they chose, and bought and hung. Their books, their cycles, their civilian clothes, and the hundred and one things they gathered around them as they grew from infancy to manhood. The old garden is the same, with the trees they climbed in youth, but *they* are not there. I am writing this as I sit on the low

wall of the little trout stream in the beautiful valley of the Chess, where we have so often sat together on our outings. The trees are green, although it is autumn. The sun shines brightly, and everything is as it was in those golden days. Everything lives on; and I live on, who it would seem could so much better have been spared. And I know they live on too, beyond the sorrow and the shadow, with the Saviour to whom they had given their young lives.

And their spirits are ever with us, filling the house, inspiring our hearts, communing with our thoughts; calling, beckoning us forward to live the life that is life indeed. And when I am tempted to falter, it is their voice I hear bidding me to "Carry on."

"Carry on, Dad. You have work to do yet. We have finished our brief tasks. Our conflict was short and sharp, but by God's help we did not falter. And you will conquer, if you only hold on. You are often weary, and we knew weariness too, although we were so young, but God has brought us through. He'll bring you through too, Dad, though a rougher road may lie before you than any you have yet trod. We would love to be with you, standing again by your side, fighting the good fight, as in the old days. But it's all right, Dad. Carry on."

"Carry on, little Mother." Oh, so low and gentle come their voices now. "Yours is the hardest part of all, Mum. So patient and loving, so self-forgetful, so brave. To whom do we owe our love of all that is good and true, but to you? We heard you pray to God, when the second blow fell, to take you too, and bring you where we are. But we saw you gather strength again as you realized that God wanted you to live—to live for His sake, and for the sake of others, as you always did. Poor little Mother, you are braver than ever we were. The weakest of us all, yet you are the strongest, and by the love of God you will overcome."

"Carry on, Sis. Did you think we did not know how great was your love for us, or that we do not know how

the blow of the parting rent your heart ? But the meeting again is sure and soon. We have seen your struggles with the tempter, Doubt, but hold on ; hold on to Christ, Sister dear, till we meet you here, and tell you all we could never express before. We know how largely you gave your life to us, but now we have given our lives for you, and the debt is paid."

" Carry on, Rob, and Dick. So much depends on you now, and you have many perils to run, while we are already safe on the other side. Run a straight race, and a clean one ; head up, chin in, shoulders well back, with your eye on the goal ; and by God's good help you will *win*."

Oh, how I had hoped and prayed that they might never be taken. But I knew when they offered their lives that the sacrifice might be accepted, else where were the value of the offer ? And it has been accepted in full. And I know that my Redeemer—and their Redeemer—liveth, and that He shall stand at the last day upon the earth ; and their feet shall stand there with Him.

I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And he that liveth and believeth in Me *shall never die*.

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It is with the hope of comforting and strengthening the faith of others that I have bared my heart in these lines ; for mine is no strange sorrow, but the common lot of thousands to-day. It was the sorrow and doubts of others that came to me as an instant call, though my own heart was breaking. Friends who knew and loved them experienced in the loss of such lads, of whom so much was expected, an assault on their faith that put it to the utmost strain. The deepest questionings of the heart can never really be spoken, but they found partial expression in some such queries as these :

" Could not God have prevented it ? "

" Could they not have done so much more good if they had lived ? "

"Were not their deaths a real dead loss, with no corresponding gain, to the cause of the Kingdom of God on earth?"

For what is really the nature of this anxious fear that gnaws at the hearts of those who are jealous for God's cause, and for His honour? Is it not a doubt, which we seek to repel with all our might, but which thrusts itself persistently to the fore, as to whether God really "does all things well?" Has He not rather managed things very badly? Can He be alive to His own interests to allow His brightest and most beautiful instruments to be shattered in His hands?

It is the fear that God Himself has allowed that to happen which shall enable the heathen to say, "Where is now thy God?"

A friend of my elder son's, when back in hospital from the trenches, told me what was their state of mind, in the face of this problem. They often talked together of the deep things of the soul, and they both found that the words of the stalwart Hebrew lads in Babylon exactly expressed the language of their hearts in the hour of danger. "Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us. If it be so, He *will* deliver us, *But if not* . . ."

"But if not?" . . . there was only one course for the English lads, as for the Hebrew lads: to go straight forward in the path of faith and duty, knowing that nothing could befall them but what was consonant with the will of Him in whom they trusted, and whose perfect love and wisdom could never fail nor err.

The idea that "God will take care of us," in the sense that He will never allow harm to happen to body or life, is at utter variance with the words of Christ and with the facts of experience. Were Christians bullet-proof, there would be no room for faith or courage. In the same breath in which Christ told His disciples that the very hairs of their head were numbered, He told them also that their enemies would kill some of them, though they could not kill their souls. Therefore the Christian can afford to be fearless, placing himself in God's hands, for

whether he lives or dies, he cannot be "wasted." The chemist in the laboratory adds one reagent to another, "destroying," to all appearance, the original substance; but we know that it is not destroyed, but lives again in more beautiful and wonderful combinations; and the new thing produced for the service of man would never have come into being had not the original substance been "used up." But the chemist may spill a reagent on the ground. That is not used—it is wasted. God never spills on the ground the soul that puts itself in His hands. The passion of the soul that loves God is to be used for His glory, and for the redemption of his fellow-men. The master passion of the world is *getting*—that of the true Christian is *giving*. And these have given at one stroke all that a man can give—given their lives for the life of the world. Shall we seek to spoil the sacrifice by asking for the life back again?

At the word of the commander the soldier goes, if need be, to certain death, but he conquers the enemy by dying. And God's good soldiers hurl themselves on the bayonets of His enemy, that the day be not lost, blunting his power, and defeating him even in their deaths.

For such deaths are to be avenged.

"Avenged? A Christian demands vengeance?"

Aye! God knows I do, with all my soul. Heart and flesh cry out for vengeance, that justice may be satisfied. And justice *will* be satisfied, and the cry of my heart stilled, so surely as God lives and reigns. The matter cannot, must not, remain where it is. God's honour is involved, and every soul that has suffered in His service is involved with Him, and their cause is safe. The great accuser of the human race may rage, and demand his price, but he has over-reached himself. He points to the sins, the falsenesses, the rebellions of man, and claims the world as his due. In his insolence he challenges God Himself on His throne of justice. "Look at these," he says, "and these; they have cast off your empire, and elected to serve me. The world is no longer yours, but mine. Give it up." But God points to the men

and women who have been the innocent and uncomplaining victims of his hate and lust of destruction; those who, like their Master, have restored that which they took not away. "Look at these," He replies, "and these,—at the great price they have paid. They owed the world nothing, and they owed you nothing, yet they have paid all that a man can pay, and their blood I will require at your hand." Every martyr for Jesus Christ, every victim to duty, every soul that sacrifices itself on the altar of righteousness or of service to man, and is content to suffer and not seek to avenge himself—every such an one drives a nail into the "coffin of the enemy's power, and will be avenged in his final overthrow. Restitution will be exacted to the last mite, the agonized cry of outraged justice will be stilled, and the unutterable yearning of the wounded heart satisfied at last.

And for me, my prayer ascends to the throne of righteousness, that He who sits thereon will fit and use even me as an instrument in His hands of the vengeance that He will exact; that He will lead me to the assault on the citadel of the evil one, and help me strike a blow at the fell power that struck down my lads, and thousands like them. Our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against the ruler of the power of the air; it is not by carnal weapons or organization that we shall beat him down, but "by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." And as I realize my lack in these things, and contemplate the awful possibility of my failing, in the few days or years that may be left me, to strike an effective blow for the God I adore, I cast myself down before Him, and cry to Him out of the depths:

Oh, my God! who alone art good, in whom alone is wisdom, Thou who alone art *right*, have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. Save me from the unfruitful life. Save me from being found unwittingly on the side of Thine enemies. Save me from adding one grain to

the sin and sorrow of the world that are rising as a mountain before Thee, or let me die. Give me death or life, O God, but save me from the death in life of the soul that lives, but lives not to Thee,—that exists, but burns not, struggles not, conquers not. If Thou grant me life, let it be life indeed, life that shall bear the fruits of the Spirit, and not the works of the flesh. For the end of all flesh is come before Thee, and all its wisdom is folly and madness. Let a double portion of the spirit of my boys be upon me, with all their pure love for Thee. If they left any work undone, strengthen my hands to do it for them, that their deaths may bear fruit for Thee, as their young lives did. And in that great day when Christ shall have put down all rule, and authority, and power, and shall set up His reign in righteousness, let me hear Him say to them and to me, “ Well done ! because for My name’s sake ye have borne, and laboured, and have not fainted.” When Thou biddest them enter in as victors, bid me, even me, to enter in with them, to be with them, and with Thee, for ever, where sin is no more. Hear me, O God, and grant my prayer, for the sake of Him who also overcame, and is set down with Thee upon Thy throne. Amen.

VIII

THE DAWN

1. CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON. .

THE dawn will not come in our day if certain people can prevent it. The interests which profit by war and other social plagues are powerful. A cold cynicism possesses many hearts, which believes in no good, cares for no good, and seeks only to profit by any opportunity which the fortune of circumstance may present, regardless of what this involves for others. There are men whom the agony of the war seems not to have touched, who appear to care no more when your husband or brother is killed than when a dog dies in the streets. The writer got into conversation in the train this evening with a gentleman who volunteered the opinion that the war had been a very good thing. The people had been getting out of hand—getting “unbearable”—and it would “do them good.” Here is plain, murderous hatred, not against the German, but against the “unbearable” English “people.” Moreover, he added, it had done a lot of good in “clearing off the surplus population.” We had plenty of time to discuss the matter, for the train was delayed for eighty minutes through the bursting of a steam pipe in the engine. Our precious necks were safe, however, for the two surplus members of the population on the footplate had succeeded in stopping the train, though at the cost of being terribly scalded as a result of their gallantry. As they were being borne away on their stretchers, I wondered whether they would recover, or whether they too would be “cleared off.” .

The writer did not argue the point, however, beyond remarking drily that it had "cleared off" his two sons—it is useless to cast pearls before swine; but the existence of these "swine" in considerable numbers is one of the most alarming factors we have to reckon with.

The exploiters are still with us; the profiteers are still with us, and their avidity is not yet sated. The food hoarders too, men and women whose first instinct and act on the outbreak of war was to use their wealth to rob the poor of food, that their own bellies might be filled. We have never yet heard of one of these repenting and confessing his or her sins, or of their being refused Holy Communion failing such repentance.

And we have to contemplate a tremendous effort by such people in the reconstruction—when everything is in the melting-pot—to secure their ends, and there is a very real danger that they may succeed. So long as the masses can be deceived by baits which appeal to short-sighted selfishness, so long as they can be hypnotized by the maddening dazzle of the picture palace, or caused to "bolt" at any moment by the yelp of the yellow press; just so long will they be at the mercy of cleverer men than themselves. Improvement will not set in till they learn to close eyes and ears to this rabble, and start quietly *thinking*.

Neither truth, nor righteousness, nor mercy, is to be allowed to stand in the way of the present unexampled opportunity for imposing new shackles on the people—shackles on their minds, their bodies, their estates. It will be attempted in the name of patriotism, but it is worth bearing in mind that the half-promises which have been made, for instance, as to changes in fiscal policy have mostly been made to deputations representing purely and solely the *trading interests* of the *employing classes*. We do not know what special claim such people can lay to patriotism, but one of their arguments is to point to the crimes of the Germans, and declare that we must "make them pay for it." The story is told of a party of navvies drinking in a beer shop. One

of their number left his beer and went out, and presently a scuffle was heard outside. One of those inside looked out. "It's Jack knocking your wife about, Bill," he reported. "Oh! *Is he?*" said Bill; "*I'll drink his beer!*"

This fairly represents the exalted idea of retribution towards the Germans entertained by some of our patriots. "We'll drink their beer!" Yet it is not the workers who will be accorded even the doubtful satisfaction of such a "revenge." It is the masters who will drink the German's beer, and the Englishman's too. .

So far as mere political measures of themselves are concerned, we do not feel disposed to get very excited over what may or may not be done. We only fear anything and everything done by jugglery and trickery. The triumph of the selfish instincts and the anti-social interests will be a sign that we have lost the war which our brave soldiers have won, and that we are to be handed over for exploitation. The placing in the saddle of the sinister trio—militarism, protection, clericalism—will be among the least of the evils which will befall us; those evils may be summed up in one word—the triumph of Germanism. We suggest that any government which introduces a new policy "in the interests of the workers" should first consult the organizations which represent the workers' interests, presenting to them a clear issue, not trying to "wangle" a vote, but taking pains to educe their real wishes. If the old game is allowed to go on in the old way, it will be a sign that the people's eyes are still blinded. And this will be a sign that God's anger is not yet turned away from us.

The dangers which threaten us arise in great measure, as we have sought to show, from the chaotic state of the ideas of Christendom as to moral principles. Since writing the pages on Nietzsche we have come across a review of another work, in one of the most reputable of our evening papers, in which the reviewer incidentally suggests that the brutalism of Nietzsche may after all be right, while in other columns the writers very properly

fulminate against the infamies of Germany. This doubt about what *is* right can be perceived underlying a very great deal of what is written by "philosophic" writers to-day. It is even more than a doubt; to the careful reader it is clear that many such writers *know* that they have no conscious, settled basis for their moral ideas, and it is even suggested that salvation may be found, not in getting rid of the evils, but in getting rid of our present sensitiveness, which makes us uneasy in the presence of cruelty and suffering. Let us go on like this, and we may yet educate ourselves up to taking pleasure in the rape of women and children in the market-places by the Germans.

And why not? If I may exploit your child's needs to gratify my greed, and scarce a bishop or dean will censure me, why may not I exploit her body to gratify my lusts?

Of all the mean instincts that ever disgraced humanity, surely the instinct of exploitation is the meanest. What pleasure can be found in such an unholy pastime the writer is at a loss to imagine. It seems like a mad and restless infatuation for wickedness for its own sake, for the exploiters usually have already a sufficiency of this world's goods. They might have been leading quiet and enjoyable lives, but they prefer to exhaust themselves in harrying the people. Perhaps they cannot help it—the wicked are like the troubled sea that *cannot* rest, but casteth up mire and dirt. They are like the wild ass in her occasion, that cannot be turned away. The passion for domination is doubtless a chief incentive, and a contempt for the masses. But this "contempt" is a very shallow sentiment, for their minds are continually occupied with the masses whom, among themselves; they profess to despise. "What do I care for the people?" exclaims their shallow master Nietzsche, "rabble, dirt, scum—let them go to the devil." Yet the people are his constant preoccupation. He is obsessed with the idea of reducing them to a state of submission to himself and his class, in order that the aristocrats

may not only live on the people, and feed on the people, but that they may also feed their vanity on the fear and reverence of the people. Otherwise surely they would leave us alone, and go away by themselves and enjoy their own "superiority." Nietzsche's aristocrats *do* want the people; they cannot do without them; they hunger, lust, burn, for their reverence and fear. The people might well feel flattered at being the constant object of their attention. They are not content even to *be* "higher men," they must be masters; it is precisely their relationship to the despised masses which preoccupies them.

This is not written with the object of inflaming the resentment of the masses, for, were the people right, their enemies would have no power over them. Our object is to awaken all classes to the fatal nature of the principles on which life is so largely lived. Think what sort of affair we have made of the world. Even admitting that the horror of recent years is more immediately the work of the Germans, and not of the whole human race, still it is only the climax of a long tale of wrongdoing and suffering, for which the race as a whole must share the guilt. Even before the war, the facts were more than sufficient to prove every count of the indictment against man. Yet he continues to pose as the victim of circumstances over which he has no control. It is about as convincing as a child caught with the jam all over his fingers and face declaring he "didn't do it."

Shall we go on in the same old way, relying on a League of Nations or some other device to save us from the due reward of our deeds? Shall we go on, as some of the portents seem to suggest, to the great final failure, till man has ultimately destroyed himself by the same wickedness, cleverness and folly which have already brought him to such a pass?

"Why *will* ye be stricken any more?" It is not we who ask the question, it is God.

And He waits for a reply.

2. GLEAMS OF HOPE.

It is customary among the "unco' orthodox" to speak of man as though he were *essentially* evil, though this carries implications which would make their gospel nonsense, if they would only think it out. This was not Christ's view, and when He speaks we are not disposed to trouble about orthodoxy. We do not find that the holding of such a doctrine makes those who hold it any better than other people, and as we *can* see good in man we propose to do our eyes good by looking at it. Christ's hatred of wickedness and hypocrisy was merely the necessary corollary of His love and appreciation of goodness.

"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" He exclaimed, at His first meeting with one of those humble, honest men, who were doubtless as common in Jewry as they are in modern Christendom. People betray their state of heart by their attitude towards His message, and He gladly acknowledged that some received it in an honest and good heart, and that their works corresponded. He did not evince any enthusiasm when He saw the rich contributing to the temple offerings, but when the poor widow crept up, and shamefacedly dropped in her little all, He was loud in His praises—though it only amounted to a farthing—for He knew what it meant to her, and why she had done it. He recognized and blessed the humble and meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and all who desired to know and to do right, or who endured or suffered for the sake of the right. Such, He says, are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. He no more shut His eyes to the existence of good trees, which bore good fruit, than to the existence of corrupt trees, which bore the other kind. He appreciated the beauty of uncorrupted human nature, blessing the children, and the marriages of which they are the fruit.

He rejoiced at faith and obedience wherever found, and declared that the obedient man's house shall stand for

ever. An exhibition of simple gratitude lifted Him up with joy, and He counted as His brethren all who did the will of God. And even if there were none who did this perfectly—even if *all* were sinners—He made friends with them, sat down and ate with them, so long as they were not persistently hard-hearted and unrepentant. He recognized that it was not devils He had to do with, nor beasts, but fallen men. And man was made Godlike; he was God's masterpiece, made verily in His image.

Our own country has not entirely failed to respond to the many unspeakable blessings with which she has been favoured in the course of her history. But the present generation does not know, or seem to care—it does not read, it does not think. We have neither the space nor the ability to recount the story, and must content ourselves with glancing at one or two of the more favourable signs.

There is a vast number of the community—the real “backbone of the country,” to whatever class they belong—to whose charge the outstanding sins we have dealt with cannot fairly be laid. There is a substratum of honesty and integrity which forms the foundation for all that is best in our social life, and which alone, in fact, makes that life possible and bearable. There are men who are humble, true-hearted, simple-minded in the best sense of the word. There are mothers of England by legion, whose virtues might almost be looked to to redeem the nation; women who, without any sense of feeling “good”—conscious rather of their own sinfulness and weakness—yet ever have their faces set *towards* the good, desiring it, striving after it, *doing* it to the best of their ability. Women who, forgetful of self and unconscious of self, give themselves to the care of their children and their training in the fear of God—this is true even of many mothers who are not consciously “religious,” but whose minds have insensibly reacted to the Christian ideal with which they are familiar. They are unknown, nor desire to be known; they mind their own business, and would shrink from publicity, but they are doing more for our

dear land every day than Parliament does in a session, or our most noisy newspapers in the whole course of their existence. May the great God of love and righteousness, the Father of mercies, pour out His tenderness and compassion on these mothers of England; may He comfort them for the sons who have been torn from their hearts to die for other men's sins, and save the land they have served so well from ever descending into the abyss.

And our island story has many honourable chapters. Will the righteous God forget our honourable record—which the nations do not forget—in the high standard of integrity maintained in our international relations? When another nation has the signature of Britain to a treaty or undertaking, it can safely go to sleep on it, and it knows it. It is not for nothing that in South America the expression “palabra de Inglés” (word of an Englishman) means “It is true,” or “Honour bright!” just as “hora Inglés” means “English time,” i.e. the hour appointed, and not half an hour late. If the keeping of the seas had been in other hands than Britain's, could another nation have discharged this high responsibility more unselfishly, more honourably, or with a more scrupulous regard for the rights and interests of all? And we are not altogether without warrant in our claim to be the champion of oppressed nations, “rightly struggling to be free,” though the reactionary elements among us have sometimes prevented such nations from reaping the fruits of that liberating policy which represents the truer instinct of the English people.

We must avert our eyes from Ireland for the moment. Our treatment of our colonies in modern times is a triumph which is unique in the history of the world; the example set by Britain forms an ideal for every nation which would be truly great. We remembered in time that our brethren across the seas were *men*; we have respected their manhood, and *treated* them as men. And in the time of our great need, thank God they have shown themselves men.

“It's no good talking,” said a German officer prisoner, when reproached by a British officer for some peculiarly

dirty act of treachery in war. "It's no good talking; we shall never be gentlemen, and you will never be anything but fools."

What a tribute! In spite of all our experience, we insist on remaining fools—and gentlemen. We insist on maintaining a code of honour, and on refraining at all costs from the foul treachery and brutality which have made the name of Germany a stench in the world. We venture to hope humbly for the day when Germany shall realize that blackguardism does not even "pay," and shall start devoting its plodding energies to the serious task of learning to become gentlemen—and fools.

Such a day can only come if we ourselves—now at the parting of the ways—definitely decide for the way of gentlemen as our rôle in *all* the relationships of life. It will come if we take God's great Gentleman as our leader. But it is time we made our choice, and that we made it irrevocably for *Him*. We must definitely choose the good to which He calls us, and as definitely refuse the evil into which we are being urged, repressing sternly the measure of blackguardism which has already infected us. We have conducted the war as gentlemen, now let us conduct peace on the same lines; we have shown ourselves gentlemen with our enemies, let us show ourselves gentlemen with our friends.

What are we going to do about it? We have created in the "gentleman" a very fine type for certain purposes, but we have made its rôle too limited—we have reserved it for certain relationships in life only. We give a poor woman our seat in the train, but we treat her and her husband in the mass without consideration. If we sincerely and intelligently accept Christ we shall act as gentlemen in *every* relationship between man and man, and between class and class. We shall commit ourselves unreservedly to the right, even if it does not promise to "pay." "God help me—I can do no other!" will be our last word when faced with every such issue. But it *will* pay. For when we scorn to act towards any class, whether in politics, business, or "religion," as a

Christian and a gentleman should not act, then we shall have brought in the needed revolution, a revolution in the hearts and lives of the people. Once established amongst ourselves, this will tend to introduce a corresponding revolution in the manners of the world; we shall complete the good work—so well begun in the war—of saving, not only ourselves, but the world. Such is the power of *ideas*, and of example, that even Germany would be influenced; and this revolution may even go deeper among such a people, for “to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much.” We may yet see that nation mourning for its sin as a man mourns for his only son—mourning with an agony of remorse commensurate with the foulness of its crimes.

But let us not be deceived by mere momentary happenings. Speaking at Glasgow on November 1, 1918, Mr. Asquith declared that the war had “cleansed and purged the whole atmosphere of the world.” But where are the signs of this? He added, “with confidence,” that it had “buried autocracy and its satellite militarism *beyond the hope of resurrection.*” But what warrant does history furnish for such a sanguine view? Tyranny follows anarchy as anarchy follows tyranny. The captains and the kings depart, but they come back again. Unchastened self-seeking and snobbery in the human heart breed autocrats and tyrants as dirt breeds flies. Unless and until these are repented of—notwithstanding all that is happening in Germany, and whatever the constitution and powers of the League of Nations—we not only stand condemned to live cheek by jowl with a nation whose very existence is a menace to the life of the world; we stand also in danger of ourselves entering on the very path which has led her to ruin and to shame.

The entry of America into the war was an element of hope not to be measured by the size of her armies or the magnitude of her organization. We are not in a position to give a general testimonial to America, for we do not know what change there has been since W. T. Stead wrote *If Christ came to Chicago*. We confess that the report

of the Commission on the Meat Trust has made us shiver. Yet in this one great step taken by that wonderful nation we do see a principle in operation which tends to revive our hope for humanity. America came fighting for an idea, and that a right idea. She came to restore the singleness of our aim, to rebuke by her attitude and her deeds the sinister ambitions which had mingled themselves with our war aims, and we believe her action has borne definite fruit in this direction. She came as a result of the leading of that great Christian statesman whom God has given to this age as a token—it almost seems—that He has not yet utterly abandoned the world to its fate. In the part played by America, and in the steadfast honesty and singleness of purpose of her President, who deals with Kaiser or commoner in such wise as befits their deeds—independently of their station in life—we see one of the brightest gleams of hope that has shone on us in the dark days through which we have passed.

And, last but not least, shining through the darkness we see another gleam—*our sons have died for us*. Is there not hope in this, though the gleam glows red, though it struggles through the cypress boughs on to broken hearts? Hope rising from despair, life rising from death! Shall we not resolve that there *shall* be hope in it—that so great a sacrifice shall not have been for naught? Perchance, as the reader raises his eyes from these pages, he may see the portrait of his soldier son looking down on him from the walls. Can you—will you—meet that gaze? Will you look back into those eyes and tell him *now*, “It’s all right, my lad. It was terrible for you, and it is terrible for me; but, so far as I am concerned, God helping me, you shall not have died in vain.”

3. THE ONLY WAY.

“I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to Heaven,
And my understanding returned unto me.
At the same time my reason returned.”

This is the only way. Too long we have kept our eyes down like the Babylonian king. Like him, we have been

eating the food of beasts ; we have been neglecting and despising the grand prerogative of man to *look up*, consciously and intelligently, to his Maker.

And all the while the Voice from on high has been calling to us, speaking to us especially in the events since that August in 1914, and we have turned a deaf ear.

We have reached the grand crisis of Christendom. Now is the day when she may be saved, now is the day when she may be lost for ever ; everything turns on her response to the voice of the Spirit of God.

The reader who has followed us thus far may be surprised that we submit no " scheme " for the ending of our troubles. But if it be a fact that no possible " scheme " can provide an avenue of escape, the writer would be rendering ill service in attempting to concoct one for the sake of rounding off his work. It may be urged that we have done nothing but block all possible doors ; but what we have attempted is rather to block some impossible doors—to head the seeker off from seeming exits which lead only to blind alleys. Were we placed down in the centre of Hampton Court maze, and were every promising opening and turning but the right one barred off, we should be outside in two minutes ; otherwise we might wander in its labyrinths all day, and find ourselves at nightfall where we started.

We have laboured to make as clear as possible our unshakable conviction that the only " way out " is Christ—returning to God by Him, and that this involves implications much more far-reaching than is imagined by current conceptions of Christianity. We say that God has *not* remained " silent in His heaven " ; that He *has* spoken to us, and that our sorrows arise from our refusal to listen to His message. From every quarter we get the admission that Christianity has never been tried, and we believe that an honest examination of Christ's message will convince the inquirer that if we try His way it will not fail us.

" Practical " men will ask, " But do you really expect people to try it ? Do you think that the mass of the

peoples of Christendom will experience such a change as you propose ? ”

I do not know. I only know that there is *no other way*. That being so, I have striven to point out *the way*. No doubts of this nature, however, can exonerate the individual from his or her personal responsibility. What others may or may not do is no excuse for each one of us. Only the personal response to Christ's appeal, followed up in *all* its implications, can exonerate us from blood-guiltiness for all the horrors that must overtake a Christless Christendom. Every individual furnishes his contribution, good or bad, to the Christendom of the future. We give our trifle, say, to the Red Cross Fund, knowing that it is not to be despised even if it is insufficient of itself to pay for a bandage ; and each individual is called upon for his contribution to the world now in the making. Withhold your pence from the Fund, and our wounded perish for lack of its healing ministrations ; withhold your personal response from Christ, and humanity must perish for lack of Him who alone can heal it.

Surely these lives of ours are worth something better than we have been doing with them, these lives that have now been *twice bought*, with a double sacrifice. Can we any longer go on with the follies, the inanities, the vulgarities, that have so largely constituted the life of Christendom, and which have been the cause of her tragedies ? Instances are not wanting to show the wonderful potentialities of the race. Even the war, as in fact all history, has again and again afforded us glimpses of what man might be—even of what man *can* be—in his more exalted moments. Think of him, after passing through countless generations of sinning forbears, with the taint in his blood of their numerous mental, moral, and physical infirmities. Think of him after all this, in those rare moments of exaltation when he forgets *self*, and is carried to high achievement by a passionate ideal, or the simple call of duty. Think even of Zeebrügge, of men going blithely, with their lives in their hands, to achieve the impossible—and achieving it ! What carried these men “ into the jaws

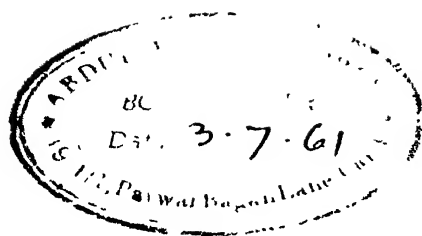
of death, into the mouth of hell" ? Stern duty, doubtless, with most ; with some—among the younger spirits, perhaps—the love of daring and adventure may have been uppermost. But, even so, it was magnificent ; for we believe mankind is *called* to daring and adventure, not to the "safe" life of the conventional religious conception, but to the dare-devilry of achievement—and man restored to harmony with God may yet achieve such great deeds as shall cause the angels in heaven to marvel. Christ is calling to-day for men ; who will be man enough to answer the call ?

Oh, how He wants man—man, the pearl of great price, which He gave up all to purchase. He knew what man was, but He knew also what man might be, redeemed, restored to God—His richest treasure. Among all the sublime themes among which our poets have let their imaginations rove, we do not know that any have ever taken up the theme of what man might have been had he never got astray from God. Presumably conditions would have been so different from anything we can conceive that it would be impossible to create a fitting background for the story ; yet we wonder that some of the more daring poets have never attempted it—never attempted to picture that great "might have been." When one lets the imagination dwell on the subject, man in harmony with God, subduing the earth, instead of being its slave and victim ; man in harmony with man, instead of at war, finding in mutual affection and esteem and *confidence* a joy that should make of life one grand, glad song ; finding in mutual sympathy and oneness of aim an inspiration and strength which should make all things possible ; when the imagination takes wing, and indulges in the daring flights that suggest themselves ; when, perhaps, one listens to music, and sees that Paradise now lost, or hears its shouts of triumph ; and then one looks around—at what we are, what we have done, what we are doing—the spirit moans with a sense of unutterable loss, the worst of all losses, opportunity lost through failure. We have missed the mark, we have come short of the glory of God.

What man may yet become and achieve, when he turns his back on the husks which the swine eat, and returns to his Father's house, is too great a theme for our present imaginations to conceive. We shall not get a glimpse of it till we have started on the road, till we have entirely reversed our present values, and humbly set ourselves to learn what are the things worth striving for. When we have learnt that, and set about the striving, when we have gone a little way along the road, new glories will open out. As we ascend higher, ever new and more wonderful prospects will unfold themselves to our enraptured view; we shall go on from glory to glory, but it will be the glory of God. In *His* light we shall see light, in *His* glory man shall at last find his own true glory.

We have said "when," and we will let it stand; but we should probably have said "if and when." For man has not yet even set his feet towards that road. He stands at the parting of the ways. How trite that sounds: how many thousands of times has it been said. But was it ever true as it is true to-day? Man stands at the parting of the ways! Man in his perplexity and distress, man with failure written on every work of his hands, man with his life lying in ruin around him. Man with a new world to make, distracted, fearful, as to how to set about the work, harassed with a thousand conflicting emotions and desires. Man with his inveterate tendency towards the *wrong* way, and yet—thank God—with his inveterate discontent, and his invincible desire for the good of which he feels he ought to be capable.

And, high over all, stands the great RED CROSS, the cross stained red with the blood of the Son of God, token of His unconquerable, deathless love for man; token of the morning that shall yet surely dawn—whether we will accept Him now, or whether we will refuse—when earth's shadows shall break, and the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings.



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